

Two Books , viz.
A
LITTLE HANDFUL
OF
CORDIAL COMFORTS :
AND A
CAVEAT
Against
SEDUCERS :

Whereunto are Annexed

The Blind Mans Meditations, and, A Dialogue between a Blind Man and Death.

By Richard Standfast, Master of Arts, and
Rector of Christ-Church in Bristol.

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. Moore, & J. Ashburne, for H. Sew-
bridge, at the Bible on Ludgate-Hill. 1684.

TWO BOOKS, viz.
A
LITTLE HANDBOOK
OF
CORDIAL COMFORTS
AND A
CALENDAR
OF
SEEDS



Whereunto are Annexed

The Blind Man's Meditations, and A Dialogue between a Blind Man and Death.

By Richard Sandliff, Master of Arts, and Rector of Christ Church in Bristol.

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. Moore, & J. Newman, for H. Selous, at the Bible on Ludgate-Hill. 1684.

A
LITTLE HANDFUL
OF
CORDIAL COMFORTS:

Scattered thorowout several *Answers*, to Sixteen *Questions*, and *Objections* following.

Intended chiefly for the good of those that
walk mournfully before God ;

And are worthy to be gathered up, and
regarded, of all such as wish well to
their own Peace.

By *Richard Standfast*, Master of Arts, and
Rector of *Christ-Church* in *Bristol*.

Believe, and Live.

The Fifth Edition, with Additions.

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Printed by *T. Moore*, & *J. Ashburne*, for *H. Saw-
bridge*, at the Bible on *Ludgate-Hill*. 1684.

A
LITTLE HANDFUL
OF
CORDIAL COMFORTS.

scattered throughout several
years, to sixteen Questions, and
Objections following.

attended on the death of those that
walk in the way of God;
and are worthy to be gathered up, and
regarded, of all men as well as
their own friends.



By Richard Sandals, Master of Arts, and
Rector of Christ Church in Oxford.

Believe, and Live.

The Fifth Edition, with Additions.

L O N D O N,
Printed by T. Moore & J. Almon, for H. Sams
and J. Bland, in Pall-mall.

WILSON (H) 111 A

A
LITTLE HANDFUL
OF
CORDIAL COMFORTS.

Scattered throughout several *Answers*
to certain *Questions* and *Objections*
following.

The First Question.

O Wretched Man that I am, who
shall Deliver me from the Wrath
to Come? for my Sins are many,
and mine Iniquity is great; And
if the Lord should deal with me according to
his Justice, and my Deserts, my Portion
must needs be in the Lake of Fire, with the
Devil and his Angels. For the Scripture
Pro

A Little handful

Pronounceth every Man Cursed, that continueth not in all things, written in the Book of the Law, to do them, Gal. 3. 10. Shew me therefore, (I beseech you,) shew me what Course to take, to come out of this Misery: Shew me the way how to get the Pardon of my Sin, and the Favour of God. I care for nothing but this, neither is there any thing in the World, that I do desire, in Compassion of this.

Answer.

This is that (indeed) which of all other things doth most concern us. For upon the Pardon of our Sins, and Peace with God, Depends all Solid Comforts while we are here, and the Eternal Salvation of our most Precious Souls hereafter. And therefore for our better, both Direction and Consolation in this behalf, let us take notice of this that follows.

There is a way for Men to come out of the Misery of Sin, and to Obtain and Enjoy the Mercy and Favour of Almighty God, and that is Faith in Christ: This is the Way, and there is none but this: neither is there any thing in the World, that

of Cordial Comforts.

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can help us to the Pardon of our Sins, to the Love of God, and to the Salvation of our Souls, but only *Faith in the Lord Jesus*.

That this is the way, is apparent enough by the Answer which was given by *Paul and Silas, Acts 16. 31.* For when the Keeper of the Prison cryed out with Trembling, *Sirs, what must I do to be Saved?* They made him this Answer, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be Saved.* There is in *Christ*, Sufficiency enough, for the Obtaining of our Pardon, and the procuring of our Peace; and there is in *Faith*, Ability enough to make us partakers of *Christ's* Sufficiency. *Christ* is the only way whereby we come unto Eternal Life, and *Faith* is the only way whereby we come to be partakers of *Christ*; by *Faith* we come unto him, and through *Him* unto God.

And that we may the better know, that there is in *Christ*, Sufficiency enough for the Pardon of our Sins, and the Salvation of our Souls, let us consider a little, both who *Christ* is, and also what he hath done for the working out of our Deliverance, and the Procuring of our Peace.

4 *A Little handful*

The Lord *Jesus Christ*, is the Eternal Son of *God*, who Pittying that Sinful and Miserable Condition, whereinto we were all brought by the Disobedience of our first Parents, undertook to Mediate the matter betwixt God and us, and to reconcile us again unto God. For the better Effecting of which great work, He came down from Heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*, and was made Man, yea in all things like unto other Men, save only in Sin, that so he might the better make us free from all Sin. Being found thus in Fashion as a Man, he set himself in our stead, and for us Men, and our Salvation, he became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. And by his *Obedience* and *Death*, He hath perfectly alone by himself accomplished *whatever* was requisite for our Salvation.

The Wretchedness of our Condition, is briefly this: We all like Sheep have gone astray, neither have we only Omitted those Duties, which the Law requires, but we have also Committed those Evils, which the Law forbids; and as the *mass* of *Unrighteousness* doth exclude us from the Fa-

of Cordial Comforts.

5

your of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven : so the *Guiltiness of Sin* doth expose us to the Wrath of God, and the Damnation of Hell. But the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath fulfilled all *Righteousness*. For in his Life, He performed as much *Obedience*, as the Law in Rigour could exact ; and by Suffering Death upon the Cross, he underwent as much *Punishment*, as could be required of Sinners, in the Severity of Justice ; and so by his *Death and Obedience* hath he provided against our double Misery. For by his *Sufferings* upon the Cross, the Justice of God is Satisfied, and his Wrath appeased ; and by his *Obedience*, the Law is fulfilled, and we are Accepted. And as by his *Death* comes the Pardon of Sin, and Deliverance from Wrath : so by his *Obedience* comes the Imputation of Righteousness, and Life Everlasting. All which, as they were done in our Nature, so they were done for us, and in our behalf, he stood in the place of Sinners, that we might be Numbered among the Righteous ; He took our Sins upon him, that he might put his *Obedience* upon us, that the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, that with his Stripes we may be

healed; He was made a Curse for us, that he might Redeem us from it; He was Sin for us, that knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21.

And the better to assure us that by his Death upon the Cross, there was paid a Price Sufficient enough for the procuring of our Pardon, he Arose again from the Dead; which he could not have done, if the Justice of God had not been Satisfied to the very full in every particular. For as Sin is the String of Death, and the only thing that makes Death Terrible; so it is the Strength of Death, and it is that only that doth give Death Dominion over us: Sin is the Lock, Bar, and Bolt, that makes fast the Gates of Death; and as the Door cannot be opened to let out a Prisoner, till the Bar be removed; so there is no escaping from Death, until Sin be taken out of the Way. *Christ* therefore, by Rising from the Dead, hath mightily declared unto us, that he hath paid the utmost Farthing of our Debts, and that by his Death he hath fully Satisfied the Justice of God. So that now, by Virtue of his Sufferings, the greatest Sins are

of Cordial Comforts.

7

made Pardonable, and there is a way set open for the worst Sinners, both to Grace and Glory. *Isay*, even for the worst Sinners. There is *no Man* now, that can deny himself to be capable of Grace; there are too many, who from the greatness of Gods Mercy, do without any cause presume to Sin: But there is no Man, who from the Heinousness of his Sins, hath any just cause to despair of Mercy; For though our Sins be many, yet the Mercies of God are more; though they be great, yet his Mercies are above them; He is Rich in Mercy, yea, his Mercy is Infinite, so that though he have spent much Mercy already upon our Fore-Fathers, yet he hath Mercy enough in Store for us also; with him there is Plenty of forgiveness, and his mercy endureth for ever: And the Merits of *Christ* are of the same Nature, for he is *Mighty to save*, and he is the same for ever, and through the Riches of these Merits of *Christ*, there is a way set open, even for the worst Sinners, to become partakers of the Riches of the Mercies of God: Now if any Man Sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ* the Righteous, and he is the Propi-

tiation for our Sins, &c. 1 John 2. 1, 2.
 And though the time of his abode upon
 Earth in the Days of his Flesh were but
 short, though his Sufferings were but for
 a Season; yet such was, and is the Digi-
 nity of his Person, (being the Eternal
 Son of God) that his Sufferings and O-
 bedience are *Ininitely Meritorious*, and his
 Blood is able to Cleave us from *all un-*
righteousness: So that we may well say
 with the Apostle, *Who is he that Condem-*
neeth? It is Christ that Died, or rather
who is risen again, and now maketh Inter-
cession for us, Rom. 8. 33, 34. But let no
 Man turn this Doctrine of Comfort to a
 Liberty of Sinning: against the greatest
 Sins there is hopes in *Christ* for *Penitent*
Believers. But because there is Mercy
 with God, shall we therefore go on in
 Sin? God forbid; there is Mercy with
 him, and therefore he must be Feared. But
 if any shall presume to Sin, because there
 is Mercy with God, through *Jesus Christ*,
 instead of Mercy, that Man is like to
 meet with nothing but Justice; For as
 Merciful as God is, and as all Sufficient
 as the Death of *Christ* is, there is no Mer-
 cy. *the righteous, and he is the Pro-*
phetic

1, 2. y for such as go on still in their Wicked-
upon these.

And thus you see that *Christ* is Mighty
enough to save us from our Sins, and to
Reconcile us unto *God*: Now that we
may have Benefit by this Sufficiency of
Christ, we must lay hold upon it by a
Lively Faith. This is that which Unites
us unto *Christ*, and makes us one with
him; This is that which gives us In-
terest in him, and makes us Partakers of
his Merits; This makes the *Death* and
Obedience of *Christ* as Verily our
own, and as Effectual for the Pardon
of our Sins, and the Salvation of our
Souls; as if they had been Per-
formed by our very selves. So that if
we do Truly Believe in the Lord *Jesus*,
then is *God* well pleased with us for his
Sake; and by Vertue of his Merits, be-
ing made ours by Faith, our Sins are all
Pardoned, and our Souls and Bodies shall
be Eternally Saved. And so much the
Scripture doth plainly Testify in several
Places. As *John* 3. 16. *God* so loved the
World, that he gave his only Begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in him,
should not Perish, but have Life Ever-
lasting.

lasting. And again, *Acts 10. 43.* Through his Name, *whosoever believeth in him,* shall Receive Remission of sins; (be they never so Many, never so Heinous.) And again, *Acts 13. 38, 39.* Be it known unto you, that *through this Man* is Preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins. And *by him all that believe* are Justified from all those things, from which they could not be Justified by the Law of *Moses.* By the Law of *Moses* we could never have been Acquitted either from the *Guiltiness of Sin,* or from the *Wrath of God;* But we are Delivered from *both,* by *Faith in Christ;* for by it we Obtain the forgiveness of our Sins, and the Salvation of our Souls.

And thus it is Manifest, That *Christ* is the Way by which we are to Obtain the Pardon of Sin, and Peace with God; and that *Faith* is the Way whereby we are made Partakers of the Merits of *Christ* for our Justification and Salvation. Proceed we now in a Word, to shew that *nothing but Christ* can Reconcile us unto God, and that *nothing but Faith* can make us Partakers of *Christ* for our Reconciliation.

There is no way whereby to come unto

unto God, but *onely Christ*: It is *onely* in *Christ* that *God* is well Pleased; neither is there Salvation in any other. For there is no other Name under the Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be Saved, *Acts 4. 12.* Neither is there any other means on our part, whereby to Receive *Christ*, but *onely Faith*; And yet unless we do Receive him, we get no Benefit by him; and therefore unless we do believe in him, we shall Perish in our Sins. And to this Purpose speaks our Saviour, *John 3. 36.* *He that believeth on the Son hath Everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God Abideth on him.* See the Sum of all this, in that place of *St. John, 1 Epist. 5, Chap. 11, 12, and 13 Verses*: *God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life. These things have I Written to you, that believe in the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life, and that ye may believe in the Name of the Son of God. By which place it is Plain, that there is a way to*
Life?

Life? that *Christ* is the way to it; that Life is so in him, that it is in no other but him; that it is so in him, that by believing in him we Obtain Life, and that it is so in him, that without believing in him, we get no Benefit at all by him. And thus you have the Truth of the Former Answer Enlarged and Confirmed, according to it's several Branches; by which it is manifest, That *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and nothing else but *only Faith in him*, can help us to the Pardon of Sin, the Love of God, and the Salvation of our Souls.

Hereupon it may be thus Replied.

The Second Question.

If I cannot Obtain the Pardon of my Sins, & the Favour of God, without Faith in Christ, I doubt my Condition is Woful, and that I am yet in my Sins, and Liabie unto Wrath. For I fear that I have not this Faith in Christ, and that I do not as yet believe in him, Shew me therefore (I pray you) how I may be Comforted against this Fear, and how I may know whether I do believe in Christ, Yea, or No.

Answer.

Answer.

Doubtless if we do not believe in *Christ*, our Condition is Woful : For there is no Salvation in any other ; and without Faith in him, we get no Benefit by him, but we are in our Sins, and the Obligation unto Wrath is in full Power and Force against us. For though the Ransome which *Christ* Paid by his Death upon the Cross, be a Ransome Aboundantly Sufficient for the Sins of the whole World ; yet the Benefit of that Death of his is Bestow'd on none, but upon such Conditions as *God* himself Pleaseth ; which Conditions, for such as be of Years, are Faith and Repentance ; which if we Want, we shall be sure to Perish in our Sins, not out of any Defect in *Christ*, but onely because we want those Conditions, whereby we come to have Interest in him, and to be Partakers of his Merits. Now that we may the better know whether we have this Faith in us, yea, or no, (and so neither be Deceiv'd with Vain Hopes, nor yet Discomforted with False Fears,) Consider this which follows,

lows, and see what Answer you can make to these several Demands.

Are you Sensible of the Misery wherein you are by Reason of your Sins? And do you find that you need a Saviour? Do you know who is the Saviour of the World; Do you know in some good Measure who Christ is, and what he hath done for us, and what the Benefits that are to be had by him? Do you know what a Necessity there is of having of him, and what a Misery it is to be without him, and what we must do, if we would have any Benefit by him? And do you Verily believe that *Christ Jesus*, and none but he, is the Saviour of the World, and that he hath both done and Suffered, as the Scriptures Testifie of him? Do you Verily believe that there is no way to Heaven but Christ, that there is no way to get Christ but Faith, and that there is no Part to be had in him, but by Renouncing all other Lords, and all other Saviours, and by Adhearing wholly unto him for all our Consolation and Salvation? And do you now Desire from the Heart to be made Partaker of Christ? And do you Sincerely Endeavour

Your

your to Accept of him, and to Embrace him? And can you be Content for his Sake, to Forsake all things, and to Undergo any Misery, rather then to Part with him? Can you be Content to take him (as we say) *for Better for Worse*, and not onely for your *Jesus* to save you from your Sins, but also for your *Lord*, to Command and Dispose of you at His Pleasure; And is it your Care to know his *Will*? And is it your Endeavour to yeild him an *Universal Obedience*? And is it your Practise in Obedience unto him, to Exercise your self to keep a Conscience void of Offence both toward *God* and toward *Men*; and Constantly and Conscionably to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live Godly, and Righteously, and Soberly in this present World? Do you thus *Accept* of *Christ*, and *Submit* unto him? Nay, is it your *Harry Desire*, and *Unsained Endeavour* so to do? Then you may be sure that you have some degrees of True Faith in *Jesus Christ*, and therefore that *Christ* is yours, that *God* is yours, that *All* is yours. For this is such a Qualification as hath the Promise, both
of

of the Life that now is, and also of that, that is to come.

By the Questions we may Examine our Condition. For after this manner is Faith Wrought in us; Such are the Preparatives, such is the Nature, and such are the Effects of a True Faith, as are Implied in these Questions; So that if we can in some good Measure make Understanding and Affectionate Answers to them all; Then we may be sure that we have a True Faith in *Christ*; But if either we know him not, or desire not to Accept of him, or care not to Obey him, we have then cause to think that we do not Believe in him; and if we think otherwise, we do but Deceive our Souls.

Now if upon Examination had, we find that we want Faith, we must be Diligent in using the Means whereby to get it, which is by Reading and Hearing of the Word of God, and Confering about it. For Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word. If we find that we have this Faith, we must be careful to Keep it, and to Increase it, by the Word, by the Sacraments, and by Prayer.

The Third Question.

UPON this that hath been Spoken, another Question may be Raised to this Purpose. I do in some Measure know who Christ is, and I do believe that he is a Saviour All-Sufficient, and that there is no other way to Salvation, but Him, and that who-soever believeth on him shall not Perish: and I my self would fain believe in him. But how may I know that I have Right to be- lieve in him, and that the Invitations to Faith do Concern me? How may I know whether I should be Welcome, or no; if I should be so Bold as to come unto him?

Answer.

For our Encouragement herein, and that we may come the more Boldly unto the Throne of Grace, we must know, that Christ is a Common Saviour, he is the Saviour of the World, and in regard of the All-Sufficiency of his Merits, there is not one of those, whose Nature he took, unto whom his Merits, are not Communicable; neither is there

A Little handfull
any one, who in that respect may not truly be said to be Savable. *The Promise is made to you, and to your Children, and to all that be far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall Call. Acts 2. 39.* Now if you desire to know, whether you be one of those, whom he doth call to believe in him; Consider then whether or no, you be Sensible of your Misery, and Burdened with your Sins; whether your Desire be to be eased of your Sins, and to be Partaker of Christ, and of those Benefits and Comforts that be in him. For if we be thus Qualified, we may be Confident, that we are of the Number of those, whom he doth Seriously invite to come unto him, and to Depend upon him. And hereof you have a Witness in your self, and Gods own Hand to shew for it, to your greater Comfort. For *those are his own Words; Come unto me all ye that Labour and be Heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest; Mat. 11. 28.* And again, *If any Man Thirst, let him come unto me and Drink, John 7. 37.* Up to such *Thirsty Souls* was Christ sent, he came to speak Peace to such as are *Wearie*; and *Broken-Hearted*, and to set at Liberty

Liberty such as are *Bruised*. So that if we finding what a *Misery* it is to be in Sin, and to want a *Saviour*, have thereupon an *Earnest* desire to be *Delivered* from this *Misery*, we may be as sure, that he calls upon us to come unto him, as if our very *Names* were *Specified* in these *Invitations*: Being thus *Qualified*, we may come *Boldly*, and upon our coming, shall be sure to find *Rest*: But without this *Badg*, we have no *Warrant* at all to *Expect* a *Welcome*. *They that do thus Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness shall be Filled: but they that be Rich in their own Conceits, and are not Sensible of any Wants, these he sends Empty away.*

The Fourth Question.

But if I find that I want this Sorrow, what Course should I take, to bring my Heart to be *Humbled* for my Sins.

Answer.

To this end, let a Man *Examine* himself by the *Law* of *God*. For by the *Law* is the *Knowledge* of *Sin*. And let him duly

think upon that fearful Curse of God, whereunto every the least Sin doth make us Liable. Let him diligently Consider, how Ugly and Lothsome Sin doth make us in the sight of God, and what a Fearful thing it is to be deprived of the Love of God, and the Joyes of Heaven, and what a Misery it is to be exposed to the Wrath of God, and the Torments of Hell. Let him seriously Ponder what a Misery it is to lose the Soul. Let him thoroughly weigh the Nature of Eternity, and the Strictness of that Account that is to come; and the Severity of that Sentence, which in that last and Dreadful Day shall be Pronounced upon all Impenitent Sinners, when they shall be Adjudged to that Everlasting Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels. All these are of Singular use to Wound our Souls, and to Effect our Hearts with Sorrow for our Sins. It is the Law that makes way for the Gospel: For thus *John* the Baptist, by Denouncing the Judgments of God upon wicked Courses, prepared the way for our Blessed Saviour. But especially, let him Consider how great things God hath done for him.

For as there is no greater Obligation to Obedience, then the Loving Kindness of the Lord: So there is nothing that doth more Aggravate our Sins, and so consequently our Misery; And therefore nothing that can tend more to the breaking of the Heart, then the Consideration of the Bounty, and long Suffering of God to us-ward. And this plainly appears by that course which the Prophet *Nathan*, at the Lord's Appointment, took with *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. For by setting before his Eyes Gods many and wonderful Mercies vouchsafed, and his own extream Ingratitude, and ill Requital of so great Goodness, he was constrained to Cry out with Shame and Sorrow, *I have Sinned against the Lord.*

And amongst all the Mercies of God, there is none that doth more deserve to take up all our thoughts, then that Departure of Christ, which he Accomplished at *Jerusalem*; Neither is there any thing that doth more tend, either to Preserve us from Sin, or to Humble us for our Failings, then the Death of our Saviour.

For suppose the Lord Jesus should

present himself unto us, when we are about to commit any Sin, or after we have done it, as he was Hanging upon the Cross, with his Sides Scourged, his Face Buffeted, his Hands and Feet Nailed, his Head Crowned with Thorns, his very Heart Pierced, his whole Body upon the Rack, and Trickling down with Drops of Blood, and speaking unto us after this, or the like manner: "Behold, if ever Sorrows were like unto my Sorrows; and yet all this was but the Punishment of thy Sins. It is thy Sins that have brought me to all these Torments; and canst thou delight in that which was the cause of such Misery? All this have I done for thy Good, and is this the Requital of my Love? I have born thy Sins, that thou might'st be eased; mine Hands were Bound, that thine might be Freed; my Sides were Scourged, that thine might be Spared; my Cheeks were Buffeted, that thine might be Kist; my Head was Crowned with Thorns, that thine might be Crowned with Glory; and is this thy Kindness to thy Friend, thus to return me Hated for my good Will? Hast thou

“thou not put me to Pains enough al-
 “ready, but that thou must Bake in my
 “Wounds, and make a Sport of my
 “Misery? Or if thou wilt not Pity me,
 “yet Pity thy self. For can that be
 “Light to thee, which Cost me so Heavy?
 “Or shalt thou escape the Cup, that art
 “a Sinner, when my beloved Father
 “would not spare me that was but a
 “Surety?

Suppose (I say) that the Lord Jesus
 should present himself, and speak unto us,
 after this or the like manner, would not
 such a sight make our Bowels to Yearn,
 and such words Cut us to the very Heart?
 Doubtless it were enough to make the
 Dryest Eyes to wish for Tears of Blood,
 and the Hardest Heart of the most Ob-
 stinate Sinner, to become in the midst of
 his Body, like Melting Wax, thus to
 hear and to look upon him whom they
 have Pierced: Yea, it is Impossible for
 any Man to think on this, and to go on
 in Sin, but such as could be content to
 Crucifie again the Lord of Glory.

And thus you see, what are the
 Chiefest helps to Humiliation, and by
 what means our Hearts may be brought

be deeply Affected with Sorrow for our Sins.

Hereupon a tumorous Heart will be ready to Reply yet further, after this Manner.

The Fifth Question.

BI this Course, and by these, and the like Meditations, I confess that I have been brought in some Measure to be sorry for my Sins, and now I would fain be Eased of them; and it is my desire to believe in Christ, but I fear that as yet I am not enough Humbled; I fear I have not so great Measure of Sorrow, as may make me Capable of this Invitation; And my Heart is so Hardened, that I cannot Grieve and Morn for my Sins so much as I should, and would do; and therefore I fear, that as yet I have no Right to the Comforts of the Gospel.

Answer.

True it is, that Sorrow for Sin makes ready an Heart prepared for the Lord; and as usually in the course of Nature, there

there is no Birth without some Pain : So in the Work of Grace, there is no Regeneration, (that of Infants in Baptisme excepted,) without some Sorrow. But as there are degrees of Pain in the Natural Birth : So in the Spiritual Birth, there are degrees of Sorrow. Some Women have a Quick Dispatch, others have a more Tedious Travel : And so it is in the New Birth, all are not Pained alike. Some there be that go Mourning all the Day long, yea, Day after Day, whereas unto others, Heaviness indures but as it were for a Night, and Joy cometh in the Morning. We must know therefore, and that for our Comfort, that it is not the *Quantity*, but the *Quality* of Sorrow, that God looks after ; neither matters it so much, how great our Sorrow be, as how True it is.

If a Youth, upon due Examination had, be found fit for the University, his Tutor never demands how long he hath been at School, how harshly he hath been dealt withall, how often he hath been Whipt, before he could come to that Perfection ; All that he looks after, is, whether or no he be fit to be Admitted :

So it fares with us: The Law is our School-Master to bring us unto Christ; and this it doth, partly by discovering unto us our Sins, whereby we see that we need a Saviour; and partly by Threatning of us with the Curse, whereby we are made more careful to look out after this Saviour, and more willing to Accept of him, and for our own ease to Submit unto him, when once we have found him. Now when we can be content to Accept of *Christ* upon any Terms, then are we ready for him, then are we fit to be Admitted unto him. And when we do seek unto *Christ* for this Admission, he regards not so much, how long we were at School under the Law, how often we were Lashed by it, or how Sorely we have Smarted under it: But all that he looks after; is, whether we be fit to come unto him. Consider therefore with your self; had you ever such a Sight and Sorrow for your Sins, as made you weary of them? and out of Love with them; and willing to be eased of them; and Desirous of Interest in *Christ*, and ready to Accept of *Christ* upon any Terms, rather then to go without him? Is it your

Grief that you cannot be more Sorrowful, and do not you desire as much to be kept from Sin for the time to come, as to have all that Pardoned that is past? Surely, if you stand thus Affected, then are you fitted, and made ready for *Christ*, and whether your Sorrow were great or little, yet it is a Token, that it was a true and a Godly Sorrow, because it worketh Repentance unto Salvation, never to be Repented of.

It may be yet further Objected, Thus:

The Sixth Question

I Confess that I have been Grieved for my Sins, and I have been desirous to believe in *Christ*: But I fear that my Sorrow is not Good, nor my Faith Sound, because my Obedience is so Faulty; For I am not so willing to forsake all my Sins, nor so careful to yield *Christ* Obedience, as I should be; or if I am willing so to do, yet mine Infirmities, and my Failings are such, and so many, that I fear my Sorrow, and my Faith are not such as they ought to be.

Answer.

128. *A Little handful*

Answer.

Certain it is, that Sorrow for Sin will nothing avail us without Amendment of Life; the Wicked must forsake his ways, if he expect Pardon, *Isa. 55. 7.* And it is he that Confesseth his Sins, and Forsaketh them, that shall find Mercy, *Prov. 28. 13.* If we willingly allow our selves in the Practice of any thing displeasing unto God, our Condition is dangerous. If we say, that we abide in Christ, we must walk as he walked, or else we deceive our own Souls, *1 John 2. 6.* If we say, that we have Fellowship with God, and yet walk in Darkness, we Lye, and the Truth is not in us, *1 John 1. 6.* And if it be not our Study and Exercise to yield Christ an Universal Obedience, our Faith is but Presumption; our Peace is but Security; our Hopes are but Shadows; and our Expectation will Perish.

But if we have an Hearty Desire, and a Sincere Endeavour in all things to live Honestly, we may not from our Failings & Imperfections presently Conclude, that we are not Sanctified at all, that we have no Faith,

Faith, no Interest in *Christ*, no Love of God in us. For Perfections is not to be attained unto, while we be in the Body; but *Sincerity* is that which may be had, and Affords unto us matter of Comfort; for the Lord loves them that do follow after *Righteousness*, *Pro. 15. 9.* And they whose sincere Desire and Endeavour it is to have Respect to all the Commandments, are Accepted of him. If it be our Unfained Desire, Study and Endeavour, in Obedience unto *Christ*, to do whatsoever he Commandeth; if it be our care to Glense our selves from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God, and not Wickedly to depart from him in any thing: I say, if it be our Unfained Desire, Study and Endeavour, so to do, we may safely Conclude, notwithstanding all our Imperfections, that our Sorrow is Good, and our Faith Sound, and that our Sins are Pardonable, and our Service is Accepted, and our Souls shall be Saved. For in Gods Account, and Acceptation, that goes for a Clean Life which is not Stained with Wilful Pollutions, and whose Obedience is extended to the utmost of his Knowledge,
and

and hath withall a purpose to amend
what God shall hereafter make him know
to be Sinful; to that Man is allowed the
Opinion of Gracious.

See further of this Point, in Answer to
Objection 16.

The Seventh Question.

If these things be so, I find then that my
Condition at the present is Good; and
if I were sure to Dye in this Estate, I make
no doubt but I should be Happy. But I fear
that I shall not Continue in this Condition;
for my Enemies are Many, and Mighty, and
Crafty, and Watchful, and I my self am
prone to Sin, and apt to fall from my own
steadfastness; and I find by Experience
that many who have begun in the Spirit, have
ended in the Flesh, and their latter Ends
have been worse then their Beginnings. This
makes me to fear that I shall not Continue
Faithfull unto the Death; And yet without
this Continuance, I shall never obtain the
Crown of Life.

Account, and Acceptation
with
and

All these things I confess are True, such are our Enemies, such is our Weakness, and the Misery of those that do turn back from the Holy Commandment given unto them, is such, that it had been better for them not to have known the way of Truth. *1 Pet. 2. 21.* For they shall Lose those things that they have done, and their Portion shall be with Unbelievers. So that a Man cannot chuse but have cause to Fear. Nevertheless, there is Comfort in God against this Fear also; Yea, *This very Fear of Falling away*, hath in it matter of Consolation, for it is a means to keep us from departing from God. *Jer. 32. 40.* And I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not Turn away from them, to do them Good; but I will put my Fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Many there be, that having begun well do yet at length grow weary of well doing, and so lose what they have done; and therefore let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall: But yet

yet let not our Hearts be troubled, let us not be dismayed with Fear; for the Perseverance of such as are *Justified and Sanctified in Deed and in Truth*, is certain, and the Foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his, and he knoweth how to deliver them out of Temptation. In further Answer to this Objection, and the better to Comfort us against this Fear, take special Notice of these Texts of Scripture, *1 Peter 1. 5. Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.* *John 10. 27, 28, 29. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow. And I give unto them Eternal Life, and they shall never Perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my Hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all. And no Man is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* *2 Chron. 16. 9. For the Eyes of the Lord run to, and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him.*

do yet as I begin grow weary of well doing; and to lose what they have done; therefore let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall: But

The Eighth Question

But if the Perseverance, and so Salvation of such as are in Deed and in Truth, the Saints of God, be so sure and certain, what mean those frequent Caveats which we meet with in the Scripture? What mean those frequent Exhortations to Perseverance?

Answer. The Perseverance of such is sure and certain, howbeit God brings it to pass by means; It is wrought in them by God, and yet their own endeavours also are required; And these Caveats and Exhortations are the means which God hath sanctified for the exciting of their endeavours, and for their Preservation from Apostacy.

Caveats we have many, and many Threatnings; Exhortations many, and many Promises, such as are, Take heed to your selves, Watch in all things, Be stedfast and unmoveable, continue faithful unto the Death, and I will give thee the Crown of Life. The latter end of backsliders shall be worse then their beginning. By which, and other like passages, we are not to think, either that perseverance is in our own Power, or that the

condition of Gods *Peautier* People is mutable in regard of him; But they do imply how prone we are to Sin, in regard of our selves; And they shew, that our own endeavours are required for the working out of our Salvation; and they are the means sanctified of God, for the preventing of Sin, and for the exciting of our Care, and so for the Preserving of us unto his heavenly Kingdom.

And whereas we are said to be kept by the power of God; We may not so understand it, as if we our selves might in the mean time sit still and do nothing: We are kept by God, and yet we also must keep our selves: It is God that keepeth us, & yet we also must Watch & Pray. But we are said to be kept by God, for our greater Encouragement. For if our endeavours be sincere, though they be but weak, yet they will be Effectual, because we have such a mighty Helper: And withal it is to teach us, to whom we ought to ascribe all the Glory, when our endeavours become Effectual. It is God that must have the Glory of it, for it is by his power that we are kept, who worketh in us to will and to do, of his own good Pleasure.

Be strong therefore in the Lord, and in the power of his Might; for he that is with us is mightier then they that be against us. And therefore we need not fear, for neither the power, nor the policy of Hell shall prevail against the People of God; And the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, Mat. 16. 18.

The Ninth Question.

I Make no doubt of the power of God, I know that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him; but I doubt of his Will, I fear that he will not do it. Surely this is a needless fear; for his love is Everlasting, his Gifts and Calling are without Repentance; and whom he loveth, to the End he loveth them. And therefore, Fear not, the Lord will not forsake his People, for his own Names sake, because it hath pleased him to make you his People, 1 Sam. 12. 22. So that if once he hath loved us so well, as to set us apart for himself, he loveth himself better, then he loveth us. And though our Unworthiness deserve that God should deny us, yet his Faithfulness is such, that he cannot deny himself.

Think therefore upon his love; Meditate upon his Power; Call to mind his Promise; Forget not his Truth; And commit the keeping of your Soul unto him in well doing. Care you to do well, God will care for the rest: For he preserveth the Souls of his Saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the Wicked, Psal. 79. 10.

The Tenth Question

But seeing that mine own endeavours are required for the working out of my Salvation; And seeing what my assurance of Salvation cannot be found, unless my care and diligence, in the constant using of all good means tending thereunto, be every way answerable: Shew me, I pray you, by what means I may be Enabled to continue patiently in well doing, till at the last I may obtain Eternal Life, &c.

Therefore I am not the Lord's Tent, nor the Lord's Tabernacle, but I am his People, &c. *Answer.* Hereunto many things are useful, the chiefest of which are these following. First, Labour & perseverance, by considering that all our ways are before God. To walk before God is the way to be Perfect, and sincerity is the way to Perseverance. For the Righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean Hands, shall grow stronger

stronger & stronger, Job 1. 7. 6. But he whose Heart is not upwright before God, will start a side in the time of Tryal; See 1 Jo. 2. 19.

Labour to overcome the World, that so neither the Cares & Glory of it may too deeply affect us, nor yet the Crosses and Troubles of it too much affright us. For each of these are great hinderances to the Practice of Piety. Persecution is that heat, that doth wither the Word, and by it some are made to deny their Master; And the Cares of the World, are the Thorns that choke the Word, and a means whereby it becomes unfruitful. For the love of Money, is the Root of all Evil, which while some have covered after, they have erred from the Faith, 1 Tim. 6. 10. Arm your self therefore against both these: and to this end consider with your self, and think often upon that of our Saviour, Mat. 16. 26. What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul. And upon that, Mat. 8. 38. He that is ashamed of me, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed, &c. And upon that, 2 Tim. 2. 12. If we suffer with him, we shall Reign with him. But if we Deny him, he will also Deny us. And learn to discern between those things that

be seen; and the things that be not seen. For the things that be seen, are but Temporal; but the things which are not seen are Eternal; 2 Cor. 4. 18.

93. Watch in all things; for our Enemies are many, and Security is dangerous, and Sin is so deceitful, that it will quickly harden us. And this is certain, a Man never yields to his own corrupt disposition for the committing of any Evil, but he is ordinarily more willing to the second Act, then to the first; And who then can tell how far he may go astray; that doth but once give way to his own Corruption.

94. Labour to grow in Grace; and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; by considering that our Labour cannot be vain in the Lord. This endeavour to grow in Grace is a special means to keep us from being drawn away with the error of the Wicked. But standing still, is in danger of turning back, and Luke warmness is the way to grow Key-cold.

95. Despise not Prophecying; if you would not quench the Spirit, if we would not be weary of well-doing, we must wait upon the Word. For that is able to build us up, and

and to give us an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified, Acts 20. 32.

And lastly, We must pray without ceasing, that he who hath begun a good work in us, would also finish it, and grant that our whole Spirit, Soul and Body, may be kept blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. This is the way to continue in well-doing; and so running we shall Obtain.

The Eleventh Question.

BUT though my Soul may be cared for, yet my Body may be in want. I want already many things that be Necessary; Or at least, I fear that I shall want such things as be Needful for me; And this fear makes my Life the more Fearful.

Answer.

Doubtless, if our Souls be cared for, other things may the less trouble us; howbeit, against those things also there is matter of Comfort in Jesus Christ. He that regards the Soul, will not neglect the Body; and he knows what we have need of: And if we be of his Family, he will be sure to provide for us. He is Able enough to help us, for the whole Earth is the Lords, and the Fulness thereof: And

of his Will we have no cause to doubt, for he hath promised, That if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, *all these things shall be added*, as it were, over and above, and into the Bargain, *Matth. 6. 33.* And he hath said, That he will withhold no good thing from them that Fear him, *Psal. 34. 9, 10.* Whereupon we may safely conclude, That if he keep any thing from us, it will be good for us to be without it. So that we may well say with the Prophet David, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I cannot want, Psal. 23. 1.* For he that hath given us Christ, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? *Rom. 8. 32.*

The Twelfth Question.

I Have been a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; I have gone through much Misery already, and many are the Crosses and Troubles that are upon me at the present, and I fear that there be more and worse yet to come: So that sometimes I begin to think that the Lord doth not love me, and I am ready to doubt what will become of me; And I fear that my Patience will one day be tryed, and that I shall faint in the day of trial. Shew me therefore, I pray you, how I may

I may be Comforted against this fear; and how I may be Enabled to wade through all with Christian Patience.

Answer.

True it is, that the Crosses and Troubles, which Men shall meet withal in the way to Heaven, are matters of Offence, and unto some they are very Powerful, turning them back from the hope laid before them, to the embracing of this present World. But if we would think upon things aright, in the midst of Misery, we should have comforts enough to refresh our Souls. Neither is there any trouble that can befall us, in the midst of which they have not matter of strong Consolation, which being Justified by Faith, are at peace with God, through Jesus Christ.

Now to the end that we may be the better Comforted against all Crosses, let us make use of these few Considerations following,

1. Consider that it is no new or strange thing to be exercised with Afflictions; Neither are Crosses and Troubles of themselves an argument of Gods hatred, but rather a token of his Love, and a witness of our Adoption, if we bear them Patiently,

tiently, and make good use of them. There is not any Affliction incident to the Nature of Man, which some one or other, even of Gods own dear Servants and Children, have not been exercised withal. Look upon *David*, and *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, and *Job*, and *Paul*, and all that Cloud of Witnesses made mention of, *Heb. 11*. And we shall find, that through many Afflictions, they all entred into the Kingdom of God. Nay, look upon the Captain of our Salvation, and we shall find, that even he himself was made perfect through Sufferings, *Heb. 2. 10*. And this must needs be a special means to bear all with the greater Patience, when we shall know and consider, that though our Afflictions be for Number many, and for Nature grievous, yet they are but the measure of our Betters.

2. Consider that God hath promised never to leave us nor forsake us, *Heb. 13*. 3. And his presence alone is support sufficient even in the worst of Miseries. How can *Jacob* be afraid to go down into *Egypt*, when God himself hath said, he will go with him? *Gen. 46. 34*. God hath made the like promise unto us, and therefore if he

he bid us go into Troubles; if he command us to walk even through the Valley of the shadow of Death, yet we need fear no Evil, as long as he is with us: For, if God be with us, who can be against us? Rom. 8. 31.

3. Consider, that unto such as do believe in *Christ*, the nature of Afflictions is wholly altered; for their Sting is pull'd out, and their Bitterness is allayed. They may sayour of *Anger*, of *Wrath* they do not; *Curses* they may be, *Curses* they are not. They may be *Chastisements* for our Correction, but they are not *Judgments* for our Confusion. For *Christ* hath Suffered, what ever *Wrath* was due unto us, by reason of our Sins: And if we be once reconciled unto *God* by Faith in *Christ*, there is more matter of Comfort in the assurance of his Love, then there can be of Dejection in the greatest Trouble.

4. Consider that *God* intends nothing but Good unto us in his sharpest Dealings with us. For it is all to humble us; and to prove us, and to do us good at our latter End; all is for our profit, that we may be partakers of his Holiness. For hereby he reforms what hath been amiss in

us in times past; hereby our iniquity shall be purged, and this is the Fruit, to take away our Sin, Isa. 27. 9.

Hereby he prevents Sin in us for the time to come; as he did St. Paul, unto whom there was sent the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should have been exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12. 7.

Hereby he doth wean us from the Love of the World, and Worldly Vanities. As long as all goes well with us, we are ready to say with St. Peter, It is good to be here; But when once we begin to be Afflicted, then presently with the Prodigal, our minds are homewards.

Hereby he deals with us as the Husband-Man doth by the Vine, he Pares and Prunes us, to make us the more Fruitful, John 15. 2.

Hereby he doth exercise our Faith and Patience, and makes tryal of our sincerity, as he did by Job. And so in this he lays the Ground of our greater Glory. For greater Afflictions require greater Patience; and the greater our Patience is, the greater shall be our future Happiness.

And the consideration of this must needs be a means to perswade us to Patience.

ence: For if we can willingly endure Smarting Water for the clearing of our Eyes; and bitter Pills; and sharp Lances for the health of our Bodies: much more ought we to bear with patience the smarting hand of Almighty God, for the health of our Souls. There is no Affliction indeed Joyous, for the present, but Grievous; but after it worketh the peaceable fruit of Righteousness to such as are exercised thereby, *Heb. 12. 11.*

Consider that if we do continue faithful unto the Death, we shall receive a Crown of Life. And if we do but have an Eye to that recompence of reward, we shall easily be drawn, as Moses was, to esteem the reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt; and to chuse rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season, *Heb. 11. 25, 26.* For the happiness of that Kingdom, which is to come, is such, that our Blessed Saviour accounts it matter of Comfort against all fear whatsoever, as it doth plainly appear by those words of his, *Luke 12. 32.* *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Where the only

Argu-

Argument that who makes use of for the
 encouraging of his little flock in the
 hopes of the Kingdom. And again by
 that place, *Mark 13* we read: *Blessed be*
ye, when Men shall Revile you, and Bles-
sede you, and shall say gallt hammer of you
against you Falsly, & for my sake. Rejoyce,
and be exceeding glad, for great is your Re-
ward in Heaven, for so Persecuted they the
Prophets which were before you. Wherein
 our Saviour doth hearten his Disciples a-
 gainst Persecution, only upon this ground,
 because the said Reward should be great in
 Heaven. And surely in St. Paul's Compu-
 tation, the present Affliction is not wor-
 thy the speaking of, in regard of that
 Glory that shall be revealed. *Rom. 8. 18.*
 Neither is there indeed any comparison at
 all between them; for the one is but a
 light and momentary affliction; the other is
 a far more exceeding and eternal weight of
 Glory. *2 Cor. 4. 17.* So that this Goodness
 of God in the Land of the Living, is
 enough to keep us from Fainting under the
 heaviest Burden: For though our be-
 loved Man decay, yet while we have an
 eye to the Joy yet before us, our inward
 Man will be renewed Day by Day. *1 Cor.*
 therefore

therefore is the Hope of this Happiness, called the *Anchor of the Soul*, and the *Helmet of Salvation*; for by this *Anchor* we are preserved in the deep Waters; by this *Helmet* we are Protected in the times of Danger; and by flying unto this *Hope*, we are sure to find Refuge in the Day of Evil.

And thus we may be Comforted against Evils present. Now as for those that are yet to come, we may thus Resolve, *Whether they shall not come at all*: For God will stand between Us and Harm, and keep us quiet from fear of Evil. Without his Providence nothing can befall us, and therefore nothing shall befall us to do us Hurt: For he is a God that delighteth in the Prosperity of his Servants.

Or if they do come, *Yet the Lord will deliver us out of all*: there shall be an end. Enlargement will come, and he will deliver his People, even because he hath a Favour unto them.

And in the mean time, *He will support us in them, till Deliverance do come*, and his Grace will be sufficient for us. *For God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are Able*. But with the temptation

temptation also make away to Escape; that we may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10. 13. beller

And he will also give us Benefit by them; For he maketh all to work together for good, to those that love him, Rom. 8. 28. And thus we may be Comforted against our Fears also. In a word, there's none can know the way to Heaven, better then he that Dwells there. And therefore which way soever God leads us, it is safe to follow him. The Uneasiness of the way, makes us think that it is the farthest way about; but the Lord knows it is the next way Home. And whatsoever they seem to us, yet all the ways of the Lord are Mercy and Truth; unto such as keep his Commandment, and his Testimonies, Psal. 25. 10. 21

The Thirteenth Question.

My Troubles are great, exceeding weighty and burthenfome, and there are no Sorrows like unto my Sorrows; and this is that, that doth so break my Heart, and drink up my Spirit.

Answer. And in the meane time
This is Answered in a word. It is but a Conceit of our own, to think our own Troubles the worst, when as indeed they are but common Temptations. But for the

the worst, grant that there be none like them; yet if we shall compare them either with that which we have Deserved; or with that which *Christ* himself for us hath Suffered; or with that weight of Glory that shall be Revealed, we shall then esteem them all as nothing. And as great as they are, if we would but only look up and consider Duly from whence they come, even that alone would be enough to make us Patient: For thus was it with *David*, he was Dumb, and opened not his Mouth; Considering who did it, *Psal.* 39. 9.

The Fourteenth Question.

B *O* my Affliction is such, that I am kept from Enjoying the liberty of the House of God, and from Praying him in the Congregation.

Answer.

This must needs be troublesome to Minds well Affected; howbeit if God himself restrains us, we may then be sure that he requires not our Presence. And in such a case, if our Desires be with the Congregation, even that Desire will be sufficient. Neither is the Lord so connected to the Congregation, but that he is

near to all, that call upon him Faithfully, whatsoever they be, when necessary, and not neglect, is the reason of their Absence. And besides all this, if at any time, by reason of Age or Sicknes, we are not able to do those things which we do desire, and did perform in the times of our Health and Strength, then shall a willing Mind be well pleasing unto God, and good Desires shall be Accepted. Yea, furthermore, this we must know for our Consolation, that a Patient submitting to the good will of God, is a *Worshipping* of him, as appears by that, *Job* 1, 20, 21. Where *Job* is said to *Worship God*, when he did with Patience and Contentedness Submit unto him. This is indeed, a Glorifying of God, and herein we acknowledge him to be our God, and in thus Submitting, we shall perform unto God as good Service as ever we did in all our Lives. For this is the Passive part of true Obedience, and the tryal of sincerity in other things. To serve the Lord when all goes well with us, is much, and it is altogether as much, if not more, to resolve to Trust in him, though he should Kill us. And if we can
 with

with Job hold fast our Righteousness, and in the Hour of Temptation not fall away; this is a true note of pure Religion, and a manifest Argument of Sincerity and Truth.

The Fifteenth Question.

AND yet after all this, I must Die; and when a few Years are come, I shall go the way whence I shall not Return; and the Fear of Death doth much Amaze me.

Answer.
Verily there is no solid Reason why it should: for God hath given us Victory over Death it self, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Death of Christ, was the Death of Death. Death fastning upon him, to whom it was not due, lost its Sting, and so became less able to hurt those that had Deserved it. Christ hath pulled out the Sting of Death, by Dying for Sin; So that now, like a Bee, or Snake, without a Sting, it may Buzz about us, and afright us, but it cannot hurt us. All the hurt that Death can do to such as believe in the Lord Jesus, is, to free them out of Prison, to put an end to their Days of Sin, to carry them home,
D 2 to

to their Fathers House, to let them into their Masters Joy, to pull down those Mouldring Cottages, wherein they Dwell, and to Build them up to Immortality. For if we believe that *Jesus* Died, and Rose again, them also that Sleep in *Jesus*, shall God bring with him, and they shall be for ever with the Lord. And of this Happiness the worst kind of Death, that can befall us, cannot Deprive us. A Man may Die in Poverty, he may Die with Extreimity of Torments, he may Die by common Calamities, and yet he may Die in Faith; and so Dying, his End shall be Peace; For *Blessed are the Dead which Die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, &c. Rev. 14. 13.* So that if we did but throughly understand the Nature of Death, and what it is to the People of God, we should be so far from being afraid of it, that with *Saint Paul*, we should rather desire to be Dissolved, because then we should be with *Christ*, which is the best of all.

To shut up this Point, and so likewise the whole matter concerning Afflictions, this let me add to the rest; That if we do desire to get Good by these Meditations,

tions, and to be upheld with Comfort in the time of Trouble, we must *Continue instant in Prayer*. This is that Receipt, which the Holy Ghost Prescribes to all sorts of Persons, against all manner of Grievances whatsoever, *James 5. 23*. This is that Remedy that is always at Hand, and never out of Season. Yea, this is that Messenger, which being Dispatched aright, was never sent Empty away. Believe it, if a Man were in a case more desperate then Death, in a place worse then Hell, yet if there he could Pray Heartily, he should find Comfort and Strength, even beyond Hope: for our Prayers use to be with the utmost of our Hopes, if not beyond them; and yet God doth use to be better to us then our Prayers.

The Sixteenth Question.

I See now that there is matter enough of solid Comfort in the Word of God. But the Unsuaveness of my walking makes me to doubt, that I have no Part nor Portion in those precious Promises, which God hath made unto his People.

Answer.

Promises I confess that are Misapplied,

can afford to the Soul no solid Comfort. But from our Failings we may not presently conclude, That they do not at all belong to us: For God looks upon the Heart; and where Ability is wanting, the Will is accepted.

Are not your Failings your Grief? Are they not besides your Will? Are they not contrary to the Current of your Desires, and the main bent of your Resolutions and Endeavours? Is it not your Endeavour to do the Will of God, though it cost you the parting with the Sweetest Sins, even your own Iniquity? And is it not your Resolution, that you will not wickedly Depart from God? If it be so, then notwithstanding your Failings, you may say with David, *I have kept thy Word*. For though this be not such a Measure of keeping as the Law requireth, yet it is such a keeping, as God accepteth. For he Accounteth such as keep themselves from wilful Sins, Upright and Innocent, through *Christ* their Strength, and their Redeemer, as appears by that Passage, *Psal. 19. 13.*

And this is a true Rule, whereby to proceed

proceed in the Judging of our selves. If a Man, that believes in *Christ*, continues in an unknown Sin, that cannot hinder the Uprightness of his Heart, so the Ignorance be not wilful; but the least touch of knowledg, or wilfulness, *Mars* sincerity. So that if our failings be not wilful, though they be many, yet they cannot hinder our Interest in the promises of God.

And what can we now object more? Do we doubt the truth of all these Promises? Surely we need not: For God is not a Man that he should Lie, neither the Son of Man, that he should Repent: Hath he spoken, and shall he not do it? Hath he said, and shall it not come to pass? Was he ever yet worse then his word? And have not we had Experience of his Love, as well upon our selves, as others? Is he not the Faithful and True Witness, and a God that is most zealous of his own Glory? Why then are we disquieted? And why are our Hearts dejected within us? Still trust in God, make straight steps to your Feet: Pray for Faith in the Promises, and stir up your self to take hold of God, surry the Lords leisure, and fear not;

Light is Sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for such as be upright in Heart : It may lie Buried in the Ground out of Sight for a Season, it may be somewhat long in coming up, and very unlikely to come to any Perfection ; Nevertheless, in due Season we shall Reap, if we faint not. And therefore cast not away your Confidence : For the worst is past, the good is begun, the best is at hand : Lift up therefore the Hands that hang down, and strengthen the Feeble Knees ; and run with Patience the Race set before us ; and being partakers of such precious Promises, let us think upon them, believe in them, and live in them : and in so doing, we shall rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

Hear the Sum of all : *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* Rom. 8. 1. *There is no Condemnation*, and there's our Comfort ; The ground hereof, is *Christ* ; the way unto it, is by Faith to be in him, the Evidence of it, *Is to walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* In the matter of *Merit*, *Christ* is all ; in matter of Inter-

est, and Application, *Faith* is all; in matter of Evidence, and Manifestation, *New Obedience* is all. Nothing can free us from Condemnation, but *Christ*; nothing can give us interest in *Christ*, but *Faith*; nothing can assure us that we do truly believe in *Christ*; and shall be delivered from Condemnation, but a care to be Obedient unto *Christ* in all things; wherefore let us so Believe, and so Live: for as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace shall be upon them, and upon the *Israel of God*.

Now the God of hope fill us with all Joy and Peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost, *Amen* and *Amen*.

In the Multitude of the Thoughts within me, thy Comforts Delight my Soul, Psal. 94. 19.

F I N I S

of, and Application, Faith is all; in man-
 if of Evidence, and Manifestation, No-
 thing can give us
 from Condemnation, but Christ; nothing
 can give us interest in Christ, but Faith;
 nothing can assure us that we do truly be-
 lieve in Christ, and shall be delivered from
 Condemnation, but a cure to be Obedi-
 ent unto Christ in all things: wherefore
 let us to believe, and so live: for as ma-
 ny as walk according to this Rule, Peace
 shall be upon them, and upon the Virgins of

Now let the God of hope fill us with all
 joy and peace in believing, that we may
 abound in hope through the Power of the
 Holy Ghost, James and James.
 In the Blessings of the Thought within
 the Comforts of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

A
CAVEAT
Against
SEDUCERS:

As it was Preached

By *RICHARD STANDFAST*, Ma-
ster of *ARTS*, and *RECTOR* of
Christ-Church in *BRISTOL*,

Whereunto are Annexed

*The Blind Mans Meditations, and, A Dia-
logue between a Blind Man and Death*

By the same Author.

*There is none so blind, as he that will
not see.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *T. Moore*, & *J. Ashburne*, for *H. Saw-
bridge*, at the Bible on *Ludgate-Hill*. 1683.

CAVEAT

Against

SEDUCERS.

As it was Prescribed

By RICHARD HASTINGS, M.A.
Rector of St. Andrew's Church,
Christ Church, Oxford.



Whereunto are annexed

The Blind Man's Medicines, and A Dis-
cussion between a Blind Man and Doctors.

By the same Author.

There is more to be said, as he that will
not see.

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. Moore, & T. Agnew, for H. Sear,
in the Bible on Ludlow-Hill, 1683.

To the Courteous

READER.

Courteous Reader,

THE continual declining of my Sun,
and decay of my Sight, as it
threatens me with Blindness, so it
warns me to provide for my Night
approaching: This moved me to consider
with my self how I might lay up somewhat
in store for the time to come, which might
be for my Support and Comfort, in so sad a
Condition. Hereupon I Composed some few
Copies of Verses, which when I had Impart-
ed to some of my Friends for their Appro-
bation, they much importuned me to make
them Publick, for the Benefit of others in
the like Condition. I was at last prevailed
withal: But being loath to suffer so Inconsi-
derable a Piece, as I judg the Verses to be,
to pass alone, I was willing to prefix some
Sermon or other, which might be for more
Publick Advantage; and being doubtful

To the Reader.

what to fasten upon, the perswasion of Friends
hath drawn this from me which here fol-
lows, which I consented to the more willing-
ly, because there is some correspondence and
agreement between the one and the other:
For as the one tends to the Comforting of the
Blind; so the other tends to the Curing of
such as through Ignorance and Errour have
been led out of the Way.

This brief Account, Courteous Reader, I
thought good to give thee of the Printing of
both; that which I now desire of thee is to
Read the Sermon diligently, to Accept the
Verses Candidly, and to Judge of both Cha-
ritably. If thou find any Benefit by either,
Bless God, and Pray for him, who is

Thine in the Lord Jesus,

Richard Standfast.

points directly to the matter proposed in
the former Verse: (2nd.) the Law,
 the light of the coming of Christ, and of the
 End of the World: **A** concerning which
 Christ bids them to take heed, that no
 one should be deceived: **C**aveat
 therefore, that they call for the
 Law in hand, but that they call for the
 Law upon all. And in
 deed, it is a Duty, that lies upon all Chris-
 tians, to be warned by their frequent

CAVEAT

Against

SEDUCERS.

most plain and evident by their frequent
 Covert, which we meet in the
 Book of **MATTH. XXIX.**

Take heed that no Man deceive you

These are the Words of our Blessed
 Saviour to his Disciples, warning
 them to beware of being led a-
 side by the cunning craftiness of
 such as lie in wait to deceive. And if
 Christ thought it fit, to give such a Cau-
 tion to his own Disciples, you need not
 think much, if we call upon you, in the
 same words, to take heed that no Man
 deceive you. The Caution, I confess,
 points

points directly to the matter proposed, in the former Verse; (*Scil.*) *The time, and the sign of the coming of Christ, and of the End of the World;* Concerning which Christ bids them to take heed, that no Man deceive them; Howbeit the words are not so to be restrained to the matter here in hand, but that they call for the like care upon all like occasions. And indeed, it is a Duty that lies upon all Christians, *To take heed what they hear, and to beware of Deceivers.* And this is a Truth most plain and evident by those frequent Caveats, which we meet mithal in the Book of God. As for Instance, *Beware of false Prophets,* Mat. 7. 15. *Beware of the Scribes,* Mark 12. 38. *Beware lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy,* Col. 2. 8. *Beware lest you be drawn away with Error of the Wicked,* 2 Pet. 3. 17. And so likewise 2 Thes. 2. 3. *Take heed that no Man deceive you by any means,* which words are very full, and very Emphatical; for sometimes we may be deceived by the Man, sometimes with the Means, sometimes with the Man; If he be a Man whom we have so good an Opinion of for his Parts, and for his Piety,

ed, in judg him too wise, to be deceived him-
self, and too honest, to deceive others;
the Authority of such a Man may easily
betray us into an Error. *Magnos errores
magnorum virorum auctoritate transmitti-
mus.* We never Err more securely, than
when we follow a Guide, who we pre-
sume, we may safely Trust. Thus the
conceit of St. Peter's worth raised him
so high in the Repute of the People, that
his Example did, as it were, compel
them to follow him, as appears by Gal. 2.
13. Thus sometimes the Man may de-
ceive us. Sometimes also the Means
may deceive us; which Means are Various,
as will appear more fully in the following
part of this Discourse. But the Apostle
would not, that any Man should deceive
us by any Means; 'Tis not the Man, but
the Matter that must be regarded, nor
should we suffer any Means to withdraw
us from the Truth.

Many more like Caveats we may find
in St. Paul's Epistles, from the frequency
of which we may very well Collect, ei-
ther some more than ordinary Precedels
as we be Mised, or some more than
ordinary Danger in falling away from our

own Steadfastness. And by all it will appear how much it Concerns every one of us. *To take heed that no Man deceive us.*

And if we look well into the matter, we shall find a great deal of Reason to make us all very careful in this Behalf.

Reason I. The first Reason may be taken from our own proneness to Errour. Green Fruits, and such like Trash are more desiræable, and more Delightful to depraved Appetites, than wholesome Food; and such depraved Appetites have we all had, ever since our First Parents tasted of the Forbidden Fruit; their Eating for our Teeth on Edg; and our Natural Corruption hath a stronger Bias in it towards Perverse Opinions, than it hath towards sound Doctrine; partly because it is very much a stranger to Truth, and partly because it is very much desirous of Novelty.

1. Our Natural Corruption is very much a stranger to Truth. Our Blessed Saviour saith, *I am come in my Fathers Name, and ye Receive me not, if another shall come in his own Name, him ye will Receive.* John 5. 43. From whence by the way, we may Observe, That Seducers

pers need not boast of the Multitude of their Proselytes, as if that Success of theirs were a sufficient Witness of their walking in the Truth; nor need the Messengers of the Truth be discouraged at their cold Entertainment in the World, as if that were enough to prove, that they were not sent of God; for Christs own Disciples may Fish all Night, and Catch nothing, when the Nets of False Apostles may be ready to break through the multitude of Fishes; and Christ himself may not have so welcome a Reception, as a False Prophet; for so he saith himself in the place alledged; which though it may seem strange at the first, yet upon a serious Survey, the Wonder will vanish. For Christ, coming in his Fathers Name, brings nothing but Truth with him, and therefore no wonder if he be neglected; but they that come in their own Names, bring False-hood, and Lies, and therefore like to be the better welcome; for Truth hath no such Party within us, as Error hath; Error is nearer of kin to our Corruption, than Truth is, and therefore like to find a more cheerful Entertainment. There is noinder in our Nature to catch

one Spark of Truth; but there is Oil enough in it to feed the *Whisper* of Error, and quickly to heighten it into a Flame. Are not Heresies Listed among the works of the Flesh? Gal. 1. 19, 20. No marvel then, if our Corrupt Nature be more prone to receive Falsehood than Truth; and because it is so prone, we have the more reason, to take heed to our selves, lest we be deceived.

2. Besides this, *Our Natural Inclination* *inclines us*; In Means we Love Varieties; In Cloaths we are for New Fashions; And in Religion too, we are apt to be taken with New Modes and Ways, though the Old be better; but as Scratching, to them that are troubled with the Itch, though it may be pleasing for the present, yet it will smart afterwards; so they, whose itching Ears, *Isaiah-like*, are delighted with Novelties, will find it Bitterness in the latter end; for 'tis the way to grow weary of sound and wholesome Doctrines, and that fits them to be an easy Prey for False Prophets. And therefore, seeing our Natural Disposition gives Perverse Tenents such advantage against us, we had need to look about us with the greater care, lest we be deceived.

against Seducers.

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Reason III. A second Reason may be drawn from the Apostacy of other Men, whom we there wish, both in Constriction and Deserts. Our Saviour Maith in the Verse after my Text; *That many shall come in his Name, and shall deceive many*; And St. Peter having made mention of False Teachers, 2^d Pet. 2. 1. In the very next Verse, saith, *That many shall follow their pernicious ways*; And Experience can testify the Truth of these Predictions, for many have been led aside, and therefore beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness; so adviseth St. Peter, 2^d Epist. 3. 17. If others have been Seduced, 'tis possible, that we may also, if we be not the more Careful.

For First, We are all of the same depraved Nature, that other Men are. That we are not all *Planets*, 'tis no thanks to our own particular Constitutions; but to that good hand of Providence, which hath fastened us among the *Fixed Stars*; That any *Stars* have escaped the Power of the Dragons Tail, 'tis no thanks to any Proper Influence of their own, but it must be Ascribed to him, who in his own right Hand hath held them from Falling.

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250 A Goodly
Rev. in 16. That we are not all Hereticks
and Sectaries, tis no thanks to our Na-
ture, for we are all cast in the same Cor-
rupt Mold, that other Men are, and
therefore other Mens wracks should be
our Warnings, and serve to make us the
more wary to avoid Danger.

2. As we are all of equal Corruption
by Nature, so we are all of answerable
deserts by our Practice. Some Men,
through the Just Hand of God, have
been given up to strong Delusions, and if
God should do the like by any of us, which
of us could charge him with any Inju-
stice? Tis through Gods Mercy, and not
through our Merit, if any of us have been
hitherto preserved from the Snare of the
Fowler, and therefore we had need to
walk the more humbly with God for the
time to come, lest through our Security,
or Pride, or Wantonness, we provoke him
to leave us to our selves, and to turn us
over for a Prey to those that Watch for
our halting.

Reason III. A third Reason for our Care
may be drawn from the Cunning, and the
Sublety of Seducers. They are very
subtle and Crafty in their ways, and
there-

therefore we had need to be the more Watchful, lest we be deceived by them. He that hath any thing to do with Crafty Companions, had need to have his Eyes in his Head, and to look about him, lest he be Cheated out of what he hath, and like Fishes taken in an Evil Net, he be betrayed into their Traps, and become a Captive to their Will and Pleasure. What are Seducers, but a Company of Cheaters? And though they be not all alike Cunning, yet there are none of them without some Jugling Tricks for the advancing of their Party, and therefore we may well take heed that no Man deceive us.

Seducers are very Subtle Persons, especially they that are Heads of a Party, and File-Leaders of a Faction; And this may easily be Collected from several Passages of Holy Writ, wherein the Actions of such Persons are set down in such Significant Metaphors, as may fitly proclaim their Craftiness to all Men; in Eph. 4. 14. we find mention of *the sleight of Men and cunning Craftiness, wherein they lye in wait to deceive.* The words in the Greek are,

in which there are three several words made use of, every one of which reacheth full home to the matter in Hand, which is, the Subtlety of Seducers. The first word is *Wile*, which comes from *who*, a dye, and implies such a *Neighbour of Hand*, as is in Cunning Gamesters, who know how to shuffle in false dice, when they please, and how to cog the dice and to throw what cast they please for their own advantage. The next word is *Craftiness*, which notes a *Cunning Craftiness*, like to that of a Serpent; Yea, like to that of the *Old Serpent*, when he first deceived our First Parents; For it is the same word which we have, 2 Cor. 11. 3. And is set there to signify the Subtlety, whereby the Serpent deceived Eve. There is yet a third word, which is as much as either of the former, if not more, and that is *Wiles*, which as I conceive, may be rendered, *After the Rate of those, who are Artificially trained up in the Trade of Deceiving*. The same word is used, in Eph. 6. 11. and there rendered, *Wiles*, by which we may see, that such Men are to be looked upon

as Cunning *Beginners* for Stratagems of War, as Men, that know how to lye in Ambush, and to carry on Designs, so covertly, and out of Sight, that there may be no Suspicion of their falshood; and if you please, I will lay before you some of the secrets of this their Art, that so you may both see, what Reason we have to beware of them, and also learn the better how to shun and avoid them.

The Envious Man is said to Sow Tares; Now there is a Method in Sowing, and that is, First, To make Choice of a fit Soil; Secondly, to Plow up the Ground and to Prepare it for the Seed; Thirdly, To Throw in the Seed, when the Ground, is so Prepared; Fourthly, To Harrow it in, when it is thus Sown, and to Fense and Water it, that it may be Fruitful; and the like Method is observed by Deceivers, in the Sowing of their Tares.

First, They make Choice of a fit Soil, and that's usually the *Weaker Sex*, who, being for the most part, of the weakest Judgments, are therefore the most like to be wrought upon, and being of the strongest Affections, are like to prove most Active Instruments, and (by rea-
son

son of their Sex) the most prevailing Orators, for the Propagating of what they are set upon among others also.

Secondly, The next work is to prepare the Ground for the receiving of the Seed, and this they do by calling into question received Truths; For when once there is a doubting, and an anxiety Bred in the Mind, then the Mind becomes the fitter to be wrought upon by them, and to receive any Stamp and Impression, which they desire to Fasten upon it.

Thirdly, When the Ground is thus prepared, then they begin to Sow their Tares; when received Truths are once brought into Suspicion, then they begin to Broach their Falshood.

Fourthly, and Lastly, They Harrow and Water what they have so Sown, with *large promises*, and *specious pretences*, and other like Artificial helps, which they have always ready, and whereby they gain both Reception and Success. And in this very Method did the Serpent deal with our first Parents; For he begins with the Woman, then he questions a received Truth; *Hath God said yea shall not Eat? Gen. 3. 1.* And after this he moves

his own Falshood, *Thou shalt not surely Die,*
Ver. 4. And that this might be the
 more easily Entertained, he tells them a
 fair story of how Hugely it would con-
 duce to their Honour and Advancement,
 and withall spightfully Insinuates, that
 Almighty God did, as it were, Envy
 them so great an Happiness. This was the
 Method of that grand Impostor of Old,
 and his Agents have ever since written
 after the same Copy, and trod in the
 same Steps, especially in their pretences
 of Love, and promises of Advan-
 tage.

And here comes in another piece of the
 cunning of Seducers, which is hinted at
 in a word that is used by *St. Peter, 2.*
Epistle 2. 14. we read it *Beguiling* but the
 word is *deceivens* which signifies *Be-*
guiling with a Bait, under which Meta-
 phor, Seducers are compared to cunning
Fishers, and Fowlers, who know how to
Bait their Hooks and Snares so, as may best
 serve, either to *Allure* the desired Prey,
 or to *Conceal* the intended Danger: Of
 like subtilty are Seducers, both in their
Baits and Blinds, both to *allure* and *con-*
ceal, the one of which they do by *false*
Promises,

Promises, the other by *specious Pretences*, of each of which a word briefly.

First, They are cunning, to allure by their Baits, which Baits are their *fair Promises* of Ease or Honour, or other like Advantage, with which they season their Errours, to make them pleasing to our Palats, and as Savoury Meat to our Corruptions. Thus when *Jeroboam* set up his Idolatrous Calves, he Baited his Design with the Ease of the People, He knew, that if they went up to *Jerusalem* to Worship the True God in the Old Good Way which he had appointed, it would not be long before they would return again to their Old Allegiance to their Lawful Sovereign; and therefore he tells them, that they shall have an *easier*, and a *cheaper* Religion nearer home; *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem*, 1 Kings 12. 28. Thus *Antinomians*, and other Sectaries, beguile Men into their Errours, with Promises of an easier and smother way to Heaven, than hath been discovered by other Men; and tis to be doubted, that the *Papists* have beguiled many by the same means, who in hopes to find among them an easier way for the Pardon of some

against Seducers.

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some Sins, than the Truth will afford them; have thereupon embraced their Superstitions. Promises of *Ease* will do much, especially when Seconded with *Profit* or *Honour*. Who so dull as not to be in danger to be wrought upon by such Allurements? The *Golden Cup* which is in the hand of the Woman mentioned, *Revel. 17.* hath, without Controverſie, Invited many to drink of her Abominations; but where ever you see these *Baites*, beware the *Hook*; You shall be as Gods, is a strong Temptation, and 'twas that by which our first Parents were brought into us bad, or worse a Condition, than the Beasts that Perish; and in like manner, the Promise of a *Glorious Liberty* may be made an Engine, whereby to bring Men into an Intollerable *Bondage*, and the hopes of a *Glorious Reformation* may betray them into an Abominable *Confusion*.

Secondly, Thus you have seen their Hooks Baited; See also their Nets covered, and that's usually done with some Specious Pretences, of which they have no small Variety.

Sometimes they pretend to more Piety than

than ordinary, & this they discover by their long Prayers, and frequent Fastings; But see how the best things may be abused, for under this Veil, some Men have carried on most Devilish designs, and Hellish Actions. Thus the *Pharisees* devoured Widows Houses, and for a colour made long Prayers, *Mat. 23. 14.* Thus Fasting was a Mantle for Murder, in the Case of *Naboth*, *1 Kings 21. 9.* And thus Religion it self may be made a Cloak for Cruelty, and Wickedness, yea for Treason, and Rebellion.

Sometimes they Pretend a great Zeal for the Glory of God, and yet underhand they drive on nothing more, than their own Interest, *2 Kings 10. 16.* Thus did *Jehu*, his Pretence was zeal for the Lord, when he cut off the House of *Ahab*, and the Worshippers of *Baal*, and yet his grand Design was the securing of himself in the enjoying of the Kingdome; And therefore, though he had an express command for what he did, and not a bare fancied Revelation; The Lord threatens to *avenge the Blood of Jezreel upon the House of Jehu*, *Hosea 1. 4.* for *sinners* were the only compass by which his Actions

were

were *sheered*, and whatever his Pretences were, his Heart was not upright before God.

Sometimes they pretend to a greater measure of *Purity*, and to an higher Pitch of *Perfection*, than ordinary. So can the Prince of Darkness Transform himself into an Angel of Light; and the Wolf disguise himself in Sheeps Cloathing. Under this pretence the *Donatists* of Old sought to Justifie their Separations from the Publick Assemblies of the People of God, and many also of latter times have set on Foot several Schismatical and Heretical Opinions, to the rending of the seamless Coat of Christ, and to the woful wounding and dividing of the Church of God.

Sometimes they pretend to more than ordinary *Humility*; abasing themselves even to the ground, to advance a Party, *Creeping into Houses*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. Not only stealing in Silly to prevent being discovered, but in a shew of Humility, ready to crawl as it were upon their Bellies to gain Entertainment, but such Crawlers and Creepers are seldom without Venome; And if these Snakes be Harbour-

ed till they grow warm, you may quickly perceive their proper temper.

And thus you have some of their *Presences* also, but you have not all their *Cunning* yet; for besides all this that hath been said upon this Subject, they can *Rack* the Scripture to the length, and breadth of their false Opinions, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. and *Torment* them to make them speak, more than ever they intended, for the maintaining of their Lies, which Scriptures, if let down again, and left to themselves, and to their own proper Sense and meaning will prove too narrow, and too short to serve their turn, and to cover their falshood. Besides this, they have also unwritten *Traditions*, and feigned *Miracles*, and cunning devised *Fables*; They can also pretend to *Dreams* and *Revelations*, and for a need can *Forge* *Antiquaries* for their own Advantage; Nor are they without their *Chained* *Books* and *Parched* *Gardments*, the better to beguile us with a shew of *Antiquity*, as the *Gibsonites* did the People of *Israel*, *Josh.* 9. 3. and all these they can set off, with *Words* and *fair* *Speeches*, *Rom.* 16. 18. and *with* *flattering* *Words*, 1 *Thes.*

1 Thes. 2. 5. *yea talibus literis*, 2 Pet. 2. 3. Artificial words, composed, as it were, on purpose, and set as in a frame for the better uttering of their False Wares, and Counterfeit Commodities. Some of these St. Paul mentions, 1 Thes. 2. 2. Where he saith, that he would not have them troubled, either by Word, or by Spirit, or by Letter, as from him; by Word, there's Tradition; by Spirit, there's Revelation; by Letter, as from me, there's Forgery; and Tradition, Revelation and Forgery are usual Arts, whereby Hereticks do deceive.

By some of these devices formerly mentioned, the *Papists* seek to support their Purgatory, and Prayers for the Dead, Invocation of Saints, Worshipping of Images, and other things of like Nature; Nor have the *Anabaptists*, and *Quakers* been without their pretended *Revelations*, and *New Lights*, whereby to maintain their Old Errors, and Vertiginous Imaginations.

And Lastly, when all other means fail, some Seducers have been ready to take Hell, by black Arts, and to call in to them the Prince of Darkness, that so

by *Lying Wonders*, they may gain the more Credit to their Damnable Doctrines.

Most of all these Cunning devices that I have mentioned, were easie to be seen in the carriage of *Simon Magus*, and those Heriticks, that were his Followers, for they pretended to a greater Depth of Knowledge, and Understanding, in the hidden Mysteries of those Scriptures, which were then extant, than other Men had, and therefore they were called *Gnosticks*, then they suited their Doctrines, to Mans natural Corruption, and to the basest of Fleshly Lusts, *Complying with the Heathen in their Abominable Idolatries*, and alluring with much wantonness, those that had escaped from them, that Live in Error, promising also Ease to the Flesh, and Freedom from Worldly Troubles, by Teaching it Lawful to deny Christ in times of Persecution; and at last, like *James and Jambres*, who withstood *Moses*, they Counterfeited the Miracles of the greatest Apostles, the more to disparage the Truth of the Gospel, and to bring their Notorious Lies into Credit, and Reputation. Thus did they. And whether the worst of these Arts have not sometimes been

been made use of by some of the *Jesuits*, and their *Emissaries* (amongst whom I think it will be no Injury to reckon some of the *Quakers* also) is not a little to be doubted. Sure I am, that they whom we Read *Seducers*, *2 Tim. 3. 13.* are in the *Greek* called *πονηρ*, i. e. *Sorcerers*; by which word we understand, Men that have some skill in *Witchcraft*, or at least, know how to *blind the Eyes*, and to *delude the Fancies* of their beholders, that they shall think (like Men in a Dream) that their Hands are full of Gold, when 'tis nothing but Leaves; and that they have before them plentiful Tables; when there is nothing to be fed on, but appearance and delusion; and so do *Seducers* deceive the Eyes of their Followers with false Lights, which serve only to lead Men out of the way, and to betray them into the Ditch. Seeing then, that *Seducers* are such subtille Serpents, such cunning Gamesters, such crafty Compagnions, such skilful Fowlers, such Masters of Art, in the Mystery of Couzenage, we had need to take a great deal of heed that we be not deceived by them. We should have been somewhat large upon this Point;

Point; but I hope, not tedious, because it is no more than the nature of the Subject doth require; but I will be the briefer in the Reasons following.

Reason IV. A Fourth Reason may be taken from the Dangerousness of Seducers: For as they are Cunning, so they are Pernicious Persons; for what are they but Thieves and Robbers? And the Thief comes not, but to Steal, and to Kill, and to Destroy, John 10. 10. St. Paul saith, See that no Man spoil you, Col. 2. 8. the word is *exagorazō*, lest any Man carry you away, as a Prey, as a Prisoner, as a Captive, to make Prize of their Estates, and Slaves of their Persons, 2 Tim. 3. 6. where the word is, *exagorazō*, from *αγορά*, which signifies a Spear, and *αγω*, Taken, so Pason, q. d. led Captive, like Prisoners taken by Conquest in the Battle, or lest you be carried away, as the Sheep by the Thief, to be Destroyed and Devoured. Seducers are no better than Thieves, Sheep-Stealers, yea, Man-Stealers, they steal the Sheep from the Shepherd, yea, one Man from another, yea, a Man from himself, and their coming is to Rob us of the Truth, and of our Peace (False

Point Doctrine

Doctrine is a great *traveller* of Mens Minds, *Gal. 1. 7.* but Truth brings *Rest*, *Jer. 6. 16.* and of our Comfort, and at last, of our very Souls, and Heaven and Happiness also; and when these be gone, what will be left us but Beggary and Everlasting Misery? And therefore being such dangerous Persons, we have the more Reason to take heed, that no Man deceive us.

Reason V. The last Reason may be taken from the Difficulty of getting off again, if once we be Intangled, if once we be got into the Snare, it will not be an easie thing to Recover our Liberty, and this Difficulty ariseth partly from the *cunning* of *Seducers*, and partly from the *nature of Error*.

Seducers are as *Cunning* to keep Possession, as to gain Admission, and to this end they frighten their Followers with the woful dangers of *Apostasy from the Truth* (for so they call the Revolting from their Errors) and by this Device they so Bore their Ears, that they are in danger to be their Servants for ever.

Besides this, *Error* is of a *Spreading Nature*, the corrupt Doctrine of the *Pha-*

risees is called *Leaven*; Mat. 16. 6. Be-
cause it is of a soure and enlarging Nature.
Hereupon St. Paul saith, *Shun* Prophane
and *Vain Babblings*, for they will increase
to more *Ungodlinesse*, and their word will
Eat as doth a Canker; 1 Tim. 4. 6; 17.
The like Caution we have, *Heb. 12. 15.*
Look to it, that no *Root of Bitternesse* spring
up, and thereby many be *Defiled*; *Evil Men*
and *Seducers* wax *Worse and Worse*, 2 Tim.
3. 13. So hard a matter it is, if once we
be *Caught*, to recover again out of the
Snare of the Devil.

So that if we put all this together, we
may plainly perceive, that we have a
great deal of Reason, to be *Watchful*
over our selves, and to take heed that no
Man deceive us.

What remains now, but that I press
you *Hearnestly* to this your Duty. If
ever there were Age, wherein this Subject
were in season, this is it. *Erasmus* in writing the *Life of St. Fe-*
rouse hath a notable Passage concerning
those times wherein that Father Lived;
His words are these, *Nam hunc suum seculum*
seditiosum, neque confusum esse omnia con-
stantiam hereticorum errores, ac dissidia

ut magne cuiusdam, artis fuerit orthodoxum esse, i.e. There was never any Age fuller of Confusion and Sedition, and the Errors and Dissentions of Hereticks had so Polluted all things, that it was a kind of Art, for a Man to be Orthodox, which passage looks as if it were Calculated for our Meridian; 'Tis the very Picture of the Times wherein we have lately Lived, wherein there have been spread abroad such Variety of Errors, that it could be no less than an Art to be Orthodox.

Almighty God fed us once with the Staves of a good Shepherd, *Beauty and Bands*, in Beauty there was Unity, in Bands Order; but our Beauty hath been Defaced, and our Bands Broken; our Unity Divided, and our Order Dissolved; many Shepherds have been Smitten, and the Flocks Scattered; the Gaps were left Open, and the Foxes let loose, and the Sheep had got *Libertatem Erroris*, and were at liberty to Stray and Perish, as it were *Cum Privilegio*. It cannot therefore but be a word in Season to call upon Men to look about them.

Blessed be the God of Truth, for the

hopes which he hath given us, of seeing
 better Times, but the Day is so newly
 Broke, and there is so much of the Old
 Leaven gone abroad, and our own Stri-
 tion is so Slippery, and Error is so In-
 fectionous, that I hope it will prove an ac-
 ceptable Service, to warn every one of
 you, as Christ warned his own Disciples
To take heed that no Man deceive you.
 And for your better furtherance in this
 so needful a work, I cannot, in the Gene-
 ral, commend unto your thoughts, any
 better Direction than this; Namely, *To*
be in the fear of the Lord all the day long;
 Even Natural fear is the great Guardian
 of the Body; how warily doth he walk,
 that is afraid of Falling; How careful is
 that Man about his Money that fears
 Robbing? How diligent is he, that is
 afraid of danger? How Circumspect is
 he, that is afraid of Sickness? So is
 spiritual fear the Guardian of the Soul;
For by the fear of the Lord, Man departs
from Evil; Prov. 16. 6. And the same
 fear will preserve us also from departing
 from God, *For 32. 40. If therefore you*
would not be led away, 2. Pet. 3. 17. *with the Error of* *Unleaves*
Men;

Man in be not high minded, but fear.
Happy is the Man that feareth alway, but he
that hardeneth his Heart, shall fall into
Mischief. Pro. 28. 14.

For Particular helps against the danger
of being Seduced, let me commend unto
you these few following.

Helps against Seduction.

First, Labour to know the Truth. A

blind Man may easily be led out of
the way. And to this end, Let the Word
of Christ dwell in you Richly, that you may
be able to discern between things that
differ; for his Word is truth, Job. 17. 17.
This will be a Lamp to our Feet, and a
Light to our Paths; but Ignorance of the
Scriptures, is the way to Error. Mat. 22.

29. This was the Rule of Old, to the
Law, and to the Testimonies, Isa. 8. 20.
And it is in force still, and it is well for
us, that we have a written Word for a
Rule to walk by; for otherwise, what
Certainty could we have of any of those
things that do belong to our Peace? 'Tis
by the Scriptures that we come to know
the Voice of Christ from the Voice of a
Stranger,

Stranger, and to be preserved from the Path of the Destroyer. This is the principal Antidote, which St. Paul Prescribes against the like danger, as may appear by comparing, *Acts* 20. v. 29, 30. with v. 31. for having warned them of grievous Wolves, which should enter among them after his Departure, for a remedy against them, he commends them to God, and to the Word of his Grace, &c. And the like may be Observed from *1 Tim.* 3. If we compare the four last Verses with the rest of the Chapter.

Secondly, Labour to be Rooted, and Secured, and Stablished in the Truth. Be not Children in Understanding, nor yet in Inconstancy; *mutator in horas*, is the Character of a Child in the phrase of the Poet; Children are never long in one mind; but be not you such Children; a tottering Wall may easily be blown Down; a Childish inconstancy is in danger to be tossed to and fro, like a Wave of the Sea; a Whetstone Cook Disposition is easily carried about, with every Wind of Doctrine; *Eccl.* 4. v. 14. *unstable shall be quickly be Despaired*; and therefore, Hold fast the Profession of the Faith without Wavering,

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Wavering, 2^d Pet. 2:14. Wavering is the
way to wander from the Truth.

Thirdly, Be contented with the Truth,
without itching after Novelties, least you
be drawn away from Sound Doctrine;
He that is weary of being led by God,
is in danger to be led away with Error.
Remember them, that were weary of
Manna, and lusted for Flesh, Numb. 11:

33. It had been better for them to have
been contented with Gods allowance, than
have longed for such Varities; they had
sweet Meats indeed, but they had soure
Sauce with it; For while the Meat was in
their Mouths, the heavy Wrath of God fell
upon them; and they that did feed to the
fullest, did never thrive with it. For God
sent dearth into their Soules, Psal. 106:15.

Fourthly, Be lovers of the Truth. Men
are not easily won to let go what they
love, but if once our love to the Truth
grow cold, we may easily be wrought
upon to exchange it for Fables. Yea, it
is just with God, that such Men as do not
embrace the love of the Truth, that they
may be Saved, should be given up to believe
Lies, 2^d Thess. 2:10, 11.

Fifthly, Be ye doers of the Truth, and
beware

beware of living in any known way of Wickedness with liking and allowance. There are some Men that are more in danger to be Seduced, than other Men are; Some are *unlearned Souls*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. These may easily be wrought upon to call Good, Evil, and Evil, Good; 'Tis an easie matter for Ignorant Men to be deceived: Some are *simple* Men that are not well Under-fer, nor well Propt up; *not Rooted and Stablished in the Faith*, which they have been taught, and such *unstable Souls* may easily be beguiled: some are *simple* plain-Hearted, well-meaning Men, People that have no harm in them, and therefore are not apt to suspect any in others, and therefore are the more in danger to be over-*reached*, Rom. 16. 18. but none in more danger to be seduced than *wicked Men*, *Wicked Men and Seducers* are coupled by St. Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 13. and well they may, for disorder in the affections, is the way to Corrupt the Understanding: Error in Practice will in time draw on Error in Judgment, and when once a good Conscience is put away, Faith will quickly suffer Ship-rack, 1 Tim. 1. 19. He that lives

lives in any known Sin, which he is resolved not to part withal, that Man is Swept and Garnished for the entertaining of any Erroneous Doctrine, which shall tend to strengthen his Hands, and to comfort his Heart in his way of Wickedness. *Facile credimus, quod volumus.* We are very apt to believe what we would have to be true, and are loath to doubt of such things, as are agreeable to our desires.

Sixthly, Beware of calling into question apparent Truths, and of disputing expresse Commands, for after this manner the Serpent beguiled Eve; And by this means the Man of God, that Was sent to Bethel, was betrayed to beleive a Lye, 1 King. 13. No Commission Per. Ol. should ever sway us against expresse Orders under Hand and Seal: Nor should the pretended Voice of an Angel prevail with us against the Expresse Voice of God, lest it prove Bitterness in the latter end; for by the one, we may be deceived, by the other we cannot.

Seventhly, Beware of their Society, who with Judicious, and understanding Men, have the repute of Seducers. Peter in the High-

High Priests Hall, may quickly be brought to deny his Master: They that desire the health of their Bodies, are careful to shun all places of Infection: And so should we be too if our desire be the health of our Souls. 'Tis dangerous for the Unlearned to be hearers of such Men, or to read their Books, or to hold discourse with them, though it be with an intent not to be led by them. Dinah had no intent to be defiled, when her curiosity sent her forth to see the Daughters of the Land; But 'tis not good to be gadding, or to walk in tempting ways. God hath made no promise to preserve us from Evil, when we lead our selves into Temptation.

Eightly, *Trust no Mans Doctrine upon his own bare Word, nor upon his Bond neither, unless he bring the Word of God for his Security.* Believe not the Matter, for the Mans sake, but the Man for the Matters sake: If we pin our Faith upon another Mans sleeve, we know not whither it may be carried: 'Tis not good to be too Credulous, lest sometimes we be Couzened: *Try all things, and hold fast what is good;* Is the Precept of St. Paul, 1 Thess. 5. 21.

How

How curious are Men in receiving of Money? A Man will tell Money after his own Father, and if any Peice be Suspicious, we Turn it, and Wind it, and Ring it, and Rub it, and Smell to it, and shew it to the By-standers, and it may be, carry it to the Gold-smith, to try and touch it, nor care we whose *Image* and *Superscription* it bears, if once we discover the Coyne to be Counterfeit. And have we not much more reason to be curious about those things that do belong to the good of our Souls? Follow therefore in this case, the advice of *St. John* 1 Epist 4. 1. *Many false Prophets are gone forth, saith he, (and so may we) believe not therefore every one, that pretends to the Spirit, but try, what Spirit they are of.* And for our better Direction in their Discovery; these following Rules may be very useful.

Rules for the Tryal of False Prophets. Rule 1.

First, *They that come not in by the Door, are Thieves and Robbers, John 10. 1.* It is spoken there of False Christs, but

It holds true also, of False Prophets, and by this Door I understand a *Lawful Calling*, nor may any Man take upon him to be a Messenger of God, unless he be fairly Called to it; and if any Man pretend to a *Mission*, and can produce no *Commission* for what he doth, he is but a Deceiver.

I do not deny, but that a Man may be truly a Prophet, and yet he may be a *False Prophet*, he may be truly a Prophet, in regard of the Lawfulness of his Calling, and yet he may be a *False Prophet*, in regard of the ill discharging of his Duty; and therefore I do not say, That a Lawful Calling is enough to argue the Truth of a Mans Doctrine; but this I say, That the want of a Lawful Calling is enough to prove the Falseness of the Person, *Who sent thee?* or, *Who made thee a Minister?* Is a needful Question; For if any Man come in his own Name, it is to be doubted, that he comes upon his own Errand. The Lord complains of some that *spake Lies in his Name*; and he never sent them; Jer. 14. 14. If they speak Lies, we may be sure he never sent them, or at least, not on that Errand; and if he sent them not, what can we expect, but Lies from them?

1 If God send any upon his Errands, It is either by the ordinary way of Imposition of these Reverend Hands, in which Christ hath intrusted that power for the good of his Church; or else by the way extraordinary. Now whomsoever he sends by this way, he doth not only vouchsafe unto them some special Revelation, for the perswading of themselves, but also he in- duces them with power sufficient for the per- forming of such works as are above the reach of Men, or Devils, and for the doing of such things, as may carry Authority with them, to convince others also, that they are sent of God. These are Gods ways, and whoever they be that pretend to be sent of God, and yet cannot make it out by one of these ways, we may safely conclude that God never sent them, unless it be to prove the sincerity of our Doubts, as was said of the False Prophet, *Deuter. 18* or else, for a Punishment to a barren and wanton Nation, and if like *Jerabek*, *Rev. 2. 20* they call themselves Prophets upon their own account, we may call them *Seducers*, about blow

2 Secondly, They that are indolent and Superficial in the Church, are suspicious Persons. The ground of this, I have from *St. Jude*, for he complains of some dangerous Men, that were in his days, and amongst other their Qualities, of which he there reckons up; he saith, That they did de- sist Dominions, and speak evil of Dignities, verse 8. And he denounces a woe against them for being Cruel, like Cain, and Covetous, like Ba-

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A Catechism
Laws, and Seditious, like *Corah*, *verse 11*. It should seem by *St. Jude*, that they were Factious Disturbers of that Comly Order, which God had settled in his Church; for though by *Dominions*, *verse 8*, we may understand the Civil Power, yet Reason will, that by *Dignities*, we understand the Ecclesiastical Order; how else could they be said to perish in the *same saying* of *Corah*? For if there had not been some Dignities and Eminencies in the Church of the *Christians*, even in those most Primitive Times, as well as there were of old in the Church of the *Jews*, it can never sink into my Head, how it is possible for any Man to perish in the *same saying* of *Corah*, now in the times of the Gospel; for this was the Heart-root of *Corah*'s Sin, he sought to equal the *Levite* with the *Priest*, and so became foully guilty of that fault, of taking too much upon him, of which he falsely accused others; his death most plainly appears by *Numbers 17, 19, 20*. This was the cause of their gathering together against the Lord, *verse 11*. *Corah* being but a *Levite*, would needs be a *Priest*, (as if in these our days) he that were but a *Pfesshy*, should take upon him to be a *Bishop*; this was the main of the matter. Indeed, he did oppose *Moses* as well as *Aaron*, but *Moses* gave in only by *shuldy*, for the grand design lay out only against *Aaron*. I do not think but that *Corah* could have been contented to have let *Moses* alone, if *Moses* would have been contented to have left *Aaron* alone; but if *Moses* be like to take *Aaron* part,

part, *Moses* must look to share in *Aaron's* portion; for rather than *Corah* will not oppose the Priest, he will oppose the Prince too; and rather than not prevail against *Aaron*, he will strike at *Moses* also: so that *Moses* was brought in, more for *Aaron's* sake than his own.

And as for *Dathan* and *Abiram*, they were nearly drawn in. And 'tis most probable, that *Corah* stirred them up against *Moses*, chiefly for this end, that he might the better engage them for himself against *Aaron*: For the main Plot was against him, and the whole design was (in all likelihood) contrived by *Corah*, 'twas he that was the Head of the Party, all they did but March under his Colours; nor is it called the matter of *Dathan*, but the matter of *Corah*; Numb. 16. 19. See also Numb. 16. 5, 11. and Numb. 26. 9. and 27. 3.

Where, by the way, Observe the joint Interest between *Moses* and *Aaron*. The design against *Aaron* reacheth to *Moses* too, and the opposing of *Moses* takes in *Aaron* also. Thus, no *Aaron*, no *Moses*; and if *Moses* be like to fall, *Aaron* is not like to stand. The King and the Priest go down together, Lam. 2. 6.

But now see the Issue of this matter of *Corah*. While *Corah* sought to remove the Bounds between the Priest and the Levite, there were others, that were as busie with the same Tools to pull down the Pale, between the Levite and the People, and by laying all in common to bring all to Confusion. If the Levite will own no Priest,

the People will own no *Levite*; or thus, If the *Levites* will all be *Priests*, the People will be ready to think, that they may all as well be *Levites*, and that all the *Congregation* are *Holy*, as well as they, even every *Man* of them. Inasmuch, that now God himself was fain to interpose in the behalf of that Tribe, which he had set apart for himself, and by Miracle to maintain his own Election. The Miracle was wrought in the Rod of *Aaron*, with lower, second, and third Stories, for though it had of it self neither Root, nor Sap, yet by the Mighty Power of God, that Rod only, among all the rest of the Rods, Budded Buds, Bloomed Blossoms, and brought forth Ripe Almonds, Numb. 17. 8. By which Miracle, as God did testify his chusing, and owning of that Tribe, above all the other Tribes, for his own more immediate Service: So by the manner thereof, he gave them at once, both an Emblem of Order, and also a Pledge for Succession; of Order, for Blossoms are in a degree above Buds, and Almonds above Blossoms; and of Succession too, for Buds were ready to grow up into Blossoms, and Blossoms to knit and ripen into Almonds, when the old Almonds were dropt off. And therefore well worthy was this Rod to be laid up in store, and to be kept for a token, being an Emblem of Order, and a Pledge for Succession, as well as a Testimony of the choice of God. And as the *Censers* of *Corah* were made broad Plates for a Covering for the Altar, for a Memorial unto the *Gibi-*

Men of Israel, that no stranger, which was not of the Seed of Aaron, come near to offer Incense before the Lord, that he be not as Corah, and as his Company, Numb. 16. 40. So might that Rod also serve for a Memorial, that no stranger, which was not of the Tribe of Levy, presume to meddle with the things of the Tabernacle, lest he be like that Mutinous Congregation. By all which, if it be duly weighed, you may easily judg, if I have not reason to say, That they who can indure no Superiority in the Church, are Suspicious Persons.

For a Token against the Rebels, Numb. 17. 10.

Thirdly, Revilers and Opposers of those Ministers, and that Ministry of the Gospel, which hath been settled in the Church by the Holy Ghost in all Ages downward, even from the Apostles Days, are to be looked upon as Impostors and Seducers.

It is no marvel, if Deceivers cry out against those that are the duly Ordained Ministers of the Gospel, for these are the rubs that lie in their way, and that strike off their Chariot Wheels, and cause them to drive on their designs but heavily. And till they can prevail with their simple Auditors to lay these aside, they will not be able to do any Feats amongst them. Are not the Ministers compared to Shepherds, and to Salt? And why so, unless it be to shew what use they are of, even in this behalf, (Scil.) to secure us from Wolves, and to preserve us from Putrefaction? And experience makes it good; for when once the Sheep grow weary of the Shepherd,

Shepherd, as *useless*, or *burdensome*, they quickly become a Prey to Wolves, and Foxes; and if once we can be persuaded to throw this *Salt* into a corner, those Flies will quickly be buzzing about our Ears, to fill our Brains with Worms, and our Minds with Rottenness. Observe the *pallage* of the Apostle; *Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14*. That you may the better take heed how you sleight the Ministers of the Gospel, all the Days of your Life. God gave *some Apostles, &c.* and *some Pastors and Teachers*. Mark, *not all Teachers*, for who then should be Hearers? But *some Pastors and Teachers*. And why hath he given the Church Pastors and Teachers, but amongst other ends, for this also, that we should not be *tossed to and fro, and carried about, &c.* verse 14.. If then God gave Ministers to prevent Seducers, we may well account them no better than Seducers, that shall revile or oppose them.

Fourthly, Beware of those, *Who decline the Word of God revealed in the Scriptures, and set up any other Rule to walk by, in the Worship of God, and way of Salvation.* 'Tis his Word that is the Truth, and therefore to decline this, and instead thereof to set up *Traditions, new Lights, or pretended Revelations*, is the mark of a Deceiver. There be many in these latter Days, that have boasted much of the Spirit, and pretended to Revelations no less than Angelical; but let them boast and pretend what they will, *Si a verbo discrebam, non sunt Evangelicæ Revelationes, sed Diabolica*

abolice illusions, if they agree not with the written Word of God, they are no Evangelical Revelations, but they are Diabolical Delusions. 'Tis the way of Christs Apostles, that we must walk in, we must bear them, i. e. Believe, Regard, Obey, and follow them, and they that do not thus bear them, are not of God, and by this we may know the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error, 1 John 4. 6.

Fifthly, *They that are for Divisions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine, which we have learned from the blessed Apostles, are to be marked and avoided*; for they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Bellies, Rom. 16. 17.

If it be but *strange Doctrine*, Heb. 13. 9. (with which heretofore we have had no acquaintance) which is brought unto us, let it stand at the Door, and examine it thorowly, before it be let in, and unless it have a good Certificate, give it no entertainment, but if it cross the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, away with it; for unnecessary Strife, and needless Divisions, have no agreement with the Spirit of God. To this purpose give me leave to acquaint you with a passage of a Modern Divine, much to be taken notice of, his Words are these: In a Church, where the Doctrine of Salvation by Christ only is soundly and truly taught and received; if any, the most Sanctified Man in shew, shall teach any thing, which may tend to make a Division, or Faction, and to disturb the Peace of

See Master Par in his Lectures on Rom. 16. 17.

the Church; suspect, and be jealous thereof: For
either it is false, or if true, yet better be buried as
low as the Centre of the Earth, than to be broached
to break the Peace and Unity of the Church.

Sixthly, Beware of those that promise Liberty
beyond the bounds of the Gospel. The Gospel in-
deed is a perfect Doctrine of perfect Liberty,
shewing us the ready way how to be freed from
the Terrour and Rigour of the Law, from the
Service of Sin, and Slavery of Satan, and from
the Curse of God, and the Wrath to come.
But if any Man shall stretch this Liberty to a
Freedom from Parents, and Masters, and Ma-
gistrates, and Ministers, to a Freedom from the
Ordinances of God, to a Freedom from the Mo-
ral Law, as the Rule of our Obedience, to a
Freedom from Penitential Sorrows, and from
Praying unto God for the Pardon of our Sins;
this is beyond the Liberty of the Gospel. This
is not Liberty, but Looseness, this is Liberty turned
into a Cloak of Maliciousness, and they that thus
promise Liberty, are themselves the Servants of
Corruption; see 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Seventhly, By their Fruits you may know them,
Matth. 7. 16, not by their Leaves, but by their
Fruit; for the Leaves may be fair, when the
Fruit is faulty; not by their Clothing, but by
their Carriage; for that may be Sheepish, when
this is Ravenous and Devouring; Not by their
Street doors, But by their Secret Chambers; for
the one may be swept and clean, when the o-
ther are foul and nasty. There is Filthiness of

the

the Spirit, as well as of the *Flesh*, and though they put away Fornication and Drunkenness, yet if they retain Pride, and Hatred, and Malice, and Wrath, and Seditions, and Heresies, are they not Carnal? Men may pretend to much Light and Perfection, and Acquaintance with God, but if they say, *They have no Sin*, they are a company of Liers, 1 John 1. 8. and 10. And they that walk in Hatred, let them pretend what they will, they walk in *Darkness*, 1 John 2. 9. and 11. And therefore look narrowly into their Conversations. A Conversation truly Pure, and truly Peaceable, Patient and Meek, full of Self-denial, and Mercy, and Charity, is a Conversation suitable to the Gospel, but they that walk contrary to those, are *disorderly Walkers*. Walkers indeed, some of them are, for they go to and fro, and compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes, who if they come not within compass of the Statute against *Vagrants* and *Wanderers* (whom a Whip and a Pail should convey to the place from whence they came) yet they should be carefully avoided by all those that wish well to their own Peace, and the good of their Brethren.

Or Lastly, If this be not the true meaning of that place, *Matth. 7. 16.* then by their *Fruits*, we must understand the *Fruit which grows upon their Doctrine*: Observe what Fruit their Doctrine brings forth, for by that you shall know them. The scope of their Doctrine will help to discover what they are. If it tend to the denying of

of all Ungodlinesse, and Worldly Lusts, and to
 live Godly, Righteously, and Soberly, in this pre-
 sent World, 'tis well; but if it tend to the streng-
 thening of the Hands of Evil Doers, this is accord-
 ing to the False Prophets of old, Jer. 23. 14.
 If it tend to Peace, and Love, and Mercy, and
 Meekness, 'tis well; but if it tend to Hatred,
 Variance, Envy and Malice, it cometh of Evil;
 if it tend to Build Men up in their most Holy
 Faith; if it tend to a Growth in Grace, and in
 the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
 if it tend to the growing up in all things into
 Him, whose is the Head, i. e. into a greater Com-
 munion with, and Conformity to the Lord Je-
 sus, 'tis well; but if it tend not to these things,
 'tis but Hay and Stubble at the most, or else, 'tis
 a Wind of Doctrine, empty and light Stuff at the
 best, having more of Noise and Sound, than of
 Soundness and Solidity. But if this Wind prove
 Blustering and Tempestuous, raising up Storms
 of Sedition and Rebellion, and kindling the
 Coals of needless Contentions all the Day long,
 though it carry with it never so great a shew of
 Zeal and Holiness, yet can it not proceed from
 the Spirit of that God, who is not the Author of
 Confusion, but of Peace, 1 Cor. 14. 33. But 'tis
 a Blast rather, raised by him, who is the Prince
 of the Power of the Air, whose subtilty is such,
 that he knows how to make Addition by Sub-
 traction, and how to Multiply by Division;
 and whose Malice is such, that he will do what-
 soever he can for the Defacing of a Beautiful
 Church,

Church, and the Ruining of a Flourishing Nation. And his Agents may they be counted, that are such Authors of Confusion, *and by such Fruits you may know them.*

Thus have I shewed you what reason you have to beware of Seducers, I have also shewed you how to be preserved from them, and by what Marks they may be known from other Men. I will now conclude all with the words of St. Peter, 2 Pet. 3. 17. 18. *Seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; To whom be Glory, both Now and for Ever,*

Amen.

The Blind Man's Meditations

On PSAL 139. 12

THE dark and light, O God, are like to Thee:
So are the Day and Night alike to me,
Yet how unlike, O Lord, am I to Thee!

The dark and light, are both alike to Thee,
Because to thee the very dark is light,
The day and night, are both alike to me,
Because to me the very day is night.

The dark's no dark to thee,
The day's no day to me,
O how unlike to thee!

Thou all things seest, unseen of any,
I nothing see, though seen by many,
There's nothing hid from thee,
There's nothing seen by me,
O how unlike to thee!

Thou'rt purity it self, I all defil'd,
Alwise, Almighty thou, I twice a Child,
I a blind Worm, thou the most Glorious God,
Thou the most holy, I a sinful clod,
Thou dwelst in light, and that light shadows thee,
Darkness doth compass, yet not cover me,
O how unlike to thee!

Happy were I, if I were like to thee
 In things wherein there may a likeness be
 And yet for this, thy Precept is express,
 'Tis thy command, I should resemble thee,
 Thus what's my duty, is my happiness,
 So gracious is thy goodness toward me,
 Thy Precept therefore should my Prayer be,
 Lord make me like to thee.
 Father of light, from darkness let me free,
 O shine upon me with thy heavenly grace,
 Renew that Image, which was loſt in me,
 Make me ſo pure, that I may ſee thy face,
 Then ſhall I happy be,
 Becauſe then like to thee.

The Blind Mans Meditation

ON ECCLES. 11.

TRuly the light is ſweet, ſaith Solomon,
 And 'tis a pleaſant thing to ſee the Sun,
 And well he might
 Thus praife the light,
 Which is ſo pure, ſo fair, ſo bright,
 And gives ſuch luſtre to all lovely features,
 And was in time, and worth, the firſt of Creatures,
 In the Creation God with Light began,
 Not for himſelf, but for the uſe of Man,
 For by the ſame
 We ſaw the frame,
 And learn to praife Gods Glorious Name

For all his Works, which, if they be not seen,
Would seem so or, as if they had not been.

Whatever Wonders, Arts, and Cost, bring forth,
Without the Light, they would be nothing worth.

Both Books and Blanks,

Pictures and Planks.

The dark bestows in equal rank,
And, if the Light her rays did not disperse,
There were no beauty in the Universe.

What's done, and how, 'tis light discovery brings,
Light is the great distinguisher of things.

All Colours, Faces,

Dressings, Laces,

Look alike in all dark places.

And without light, the World would, in conclusion,
Seem but a mere Chaos of Confusion.

And with the light, the sight may well compare
In use, and loss, they do so jointly share.

No light, no sight,

No sight, no light,

Where either fails, 'tis all but night.

Here (one alone is none) 'tis true of either

For both are useless, if not both together.

If light and sight, be then so full of gladness

Neds must the loss of both abound with sadness.

Then woe is me

That cannot see,

My light and sight Eclipsed be

And I may say, my worldly joys are past

For now my Sun is set, I have seen my last.

Yet why should I so much dejected be?

Why should the loss of Sight so trouble me?

For this I find,

There's none so blind,

As he that hath a darkned mind.

If God reveal to me his loving Kindness,

~~Please account my loss of Eye-sight Blindness.~~

Though I be Blind, yet may I in some measure,

See the Dares Wonders, and the Gospels Treasure.

How to believe,

And how to live,

Gods Word doth full directions give,

With which if once my mind enlighten'd be,

I never more complain, I cannot see,

There are the things that do concern our Peace,

Wherein themselves the Blessed Angels play.

Thence springs that light,

That brings delight,

And can redeem my Soul from night.

And is an endless light preparatory,

The light of Grace, leads to the light of Glory.

And that's the Inheritance of the Saints in light,

Of which the Blind may yet obtain the sight.

Above the Shute,

Jobs hopes did rise,

Though Death should quite consume his Eyes.

With whose assistance, Lord let me rest in peace.

I hope to see with better Eyes than these.

When there be so many sweeter lights,

Than in which these present days are bright.

Lord

Lord shew thou me,
The way to thee,
Fill me with hopes, thy Face to see,
And Ple not say, though Blind, my Joys are gone,
But rather thus, my Joys are yet to come.

The Blind Mans Loss.

Losers, they say may speak, then blame not me,
If I bewail mine own unhappiness;
For I'm a Loser in an high degree,
Higher, indeed, than I can well express,
And yet I know not how to hold my peace,
Speaking may give a grievous mind some ease,
My windows lately had a stately prospect,
Of hills and vales, of towns and woods, & fields,
Of forts, and ships, and every pleasing object,
Which either skies, or earth, or ocean yields,
But now tis lost, and that which adds to grieve me
Tis not the Art of Man, that can relieve me,
I had a skilful Guide, that did direct me,
I had a watchful Guard, that did attend me,
I had a faithful Scout, that did respect me,
And upon all occasions much befriended me,
All which are lost, and I to loss demand,
My Sight, my Guide, my Guard, my Scout, &c.
O what an Alteration Blindness brings,
Through want of Sight, things be not what they be.

Windsor

Windows and Eyes to me be no such things,
 The Day's no Day, the Sun's no Sun to me,
 Blindness hath turn'd my windows into walls,
 My noon to night, mine eyes to useles balls.

I have lost the use of all my books and papers,
 Which were so helpful to me heretofore;
 I have lost the light, and now through cloudy vapours
 'Tis grown so dark, that I can work no more.
 All these I lost, when once I lost my sight,
 And now 'tis time to bid the World good night.

But stay (my Soul) though great thy losses are,
 Thy Blessed Saviour doth not yet forsake thee,
 Make him thine own, and then thou needst not care,
 His joyful presence will a gainet make thee.
 That's true indeed, to him I'll therefore flie,
 Whose fulness can my Losses all supply.

Be thou my strength (O God) and I stand surely ;

Be thou my light, and I shall find my way ;

Be thou my shield, and I shall walk securely ;

Be thou my guide, and I shall never stray,

Be thou my strength, my light, my shield, my guide,

And I shall neither stray, nor fall, nor slide.

Be thou my fortress, foes shall foil me never ;

Be thou my portion, I shall ne'r be poor ;

Be thou my life, and I shall live for ever ;

Be thou my God, and I desire no more ;

Shine thou on me, and I shall need no Sun,

Nor fear, whilst thou art mine, to be undone.

The Blind Mans Advantage.

THe dark doth not a Dungeon make,
 Nor night the want of brightness;
 A knowing and contented mind
 Can turn that dark to lightness;
 May I from Ignorance be free,
 And see Gods loving kindness,
 With Angels bright,
 That live in light,
 I'll not complain of blindness.
 The foolish are compar'd with beasts,
 Though differing in their features;
 Who knowledg wants, though he have his sight,
 Is but a brutish creature,
 Where Eyes are lost, the inward light
 With knowledg can require them;
 Minds truly wise
 Have Angels eyes,
 'Tis happy to be like them.
 'Tis sad, I know, to lose the sight,
 And much to be lamented;
 Yet therein find I gain enough
 To make the Blind contented;
 For when mine eyes could look abroad
 They sometimes bred me dangers,
 And I was then,
 Like many men,
 At home too much a stranger.

But now I'm free from all those shares
Way-laid for Eyes that wander,
Whose looks have often prov'd to hurt;
No better than a pander;
From all whose most alluring baits
My blindness doth exempt me;

What Eye beguil'd,

Or David foul'd,

Hath now no power to tempt me.

And now mine eyes are inward bent

With earnest inquisition,

To search, and try, and know my self,

And what's mine own condition;

Thus are they rather turn'd than lost,

For that, which was me fromward;

Hath now no looks

For other books,

But all my sight is homeward.

Homeward, indeed, my blindness calls,

My certain change foretelling,

For sith my windows be shut up,

I must look to remove my dwelling;

There is an house, not made with hands,

The joys of whose fruition

My Faith gives me

Good hopes to see;

For the end of Faith, is Vision.

And thither, to be remov'd from hence,

I may well count a kindness,

For though I here have lost my sight,

Yet there I shall loose my blindness.

Thus he, that out of dark brought light,
 To blessings turns our crosses,
 Where his love takes
 His goodness makes
 Us gainers by our losses.

An Address to Blindness.

Wherein are contained several grounds of
 chearful Patience for those that be in that
 condition.

Welcome Blindness for his sake,
 From whom thou didst commission take
 To seize upon my watchful spies,
 And by degrees to cloud mine eyes:
 Because thine Orders were from God,
 Ple not repine, but kiss my Rod.
 No little Birds to Earth Decline,
 Without a Providence Divine;
 I may as well conclude from thence,
 No Blindness but by Providence;
 All rising thoughts I therefore shun,
 And only say, Gods will be done.
 From him the Holy Lord of Might,
 There's nothing can proceed but right
 Or light on me, but what is just,
 For what am I, but sinful dust?
 The Provocation then being from me,
 Submissive Patience will become me.

Besides,

*Besides, God would be understood,
In all he sends, to seek our good.
His bitter Pills intend our health,
And outward losses inward wealth,
His very chiding comes from kindness,
And therefore once more welcome Blindness.*

*With aged Eli thou didst dwell,
And Father Isaac knew thee well,
With Jacob too thou didst abide,
And other Holy Men beside,
Why then should I deny submission,
When Saints have been in my condition?*

*Thy first appearance calls thee foe,
But better known, thou art not so;
At least there's more of friend in thee,
Than at the first there seems to be:
For though the body may despise thee,
The soul may prove a gainer by thee.
The clouds Eclipse all earthly beauties,
And yet obstruct not Holy duties;
For I can hear, discourse, and pray,
Though thou hast took my sight away,
Thou rather furtherest such transactions
In helping to prevent distractions.*

*Thy mantle muffles up the sight,
And yet obscures no inward light,
Nay, thou giv'st leisure and occasions,
For many heavenly meditations,
And canst with faith and hope agree,
Why then should I fall out with thee?*

'Twixt faith and thee hath ever been
 Consent; for that's of things not seen;
 A Christians walking suits thee right,
 For that's by faith, and not by sight;
 And, for a Saint, the best ingredients,
 Are hood-wink't faith, and blind obedience.

When once God speaks, Man should be mute,
 Believe, obey, and not dispute,
 For of his word the truth and right
 Hath no dependence on our sight;
 Thou canst not therefore, I confess,
 Either bindet faith or holiness.

Nor canst thou bar me from his love,
 Whom no mans face could ever move;
 Or me from loving him again,
 That doth invisible remain;
 And I, though blind, may have a being,
 Where blindness shall be turn'd to seeing.

In Heaven, I know, there dwells no night,
 But Glorious and Eternal light,
 For which thou mak'st me pant and pray,
 And pressest me to sigh and say,
 O come the times when I shall never
 Be Blind at all, but see for ever.

Thou also teachest me to know
 The emptiness of things below;
 For now by thee I plainly find,
 That all this World is all but wind;
 And from the Scepter to the Rod,
 There's nothing worth by love but God.

In sum, seeing that from God thou art;
For good; and not without desert:
No foe to faith, or hope, or love,
But rather friend to things above,
Contented I may well remain,
Till Heaven restore my sight again.

The Complaint and the Suit of a Sinner.

Ah Me!

WHat a wretch should I be,
Should I suffer what I see
That my sins do require!

There be none of them so small,
Which for vengeance do not call,
And for bitterness and gall,
Loss of body, soul, and all
In the Pit of woe and thrall.

'Tis no less than endless fire,
That in justice is their hire.

Sin, Sin,

With my Life did begin,
And I have liv'd therein

All my days heretofore;
Sins of heart, head, hand and tongue,
Through my Life all along,
Like a thread have they run,
Binding me to be undone,
Many and great are they grown,
And if Justice scan the score,
I must perish evermore.

Poor I,

Whither now shall I fly,

To be set at liberty,

From this depth of misery?

'Tis not Sea, 'tis not Shore,

'Tis not all the Indian o're;

'Tis not Rome with all her store,

That bath Salve to cure my sore,

Only ~~One~~ can me restore.

To that Altar I will fly,

There Ple live, there I le dye.

Save, Save,

Mercy, Lord, do I crave,

Other Refuge none I have,

But thy Mercy to implore;

O look upon me through that side,

Which the spear made so wide,

Look on me through him that died,

And for Sin was Crucified.

Grant his Wounds my Sins may hide,

And his Blood cross my score

And I ask but one thing more.

Grace, Grace,

In my Heart do thou place,

That I may run the race,

Which thy Laws do require,

Give me, Lord, I humbly sue,

Grace to know, grace to do,

Grace that may me so renew,

And confirm, and perfect too,

That, when Death shall claim his due,

Grace in Glory may expire,

1009 This is all my desire.

An EPITAPH.

Life leads to death, so nature saith;
 Death is the way to Life, so Faith.
 Thus let us think of both. Say I
 He that desires to live, must dye.

A Meditation upon this EPITAPH.

Life is the way to Death,
 The common course of Nature saith,
 Death is the way to Life,
 This is a Truth maintain'd by Faith.
 Even Nature then
 May mind us men
 To look for an alteration;
 But against that day
 'Tis Faith must lay
 Sure grounds of Consolation.

He that would live, must dye,
 So Faith and Nature both do teach,
 In words they both comply,
 And yet in sense they make a breach;
 Who love this breath,
 Must look for death,
 Thus Nature doth explain it;
 Faith thus: who love
 That Life above,
 Must dye before obtain it.

But

But 'tis by both confest

All Adam's Race are born to dye.

The worst, and eke the best,

The rich, the poor, the low, the high

Against Death's Dart

The wisest heart

Could never yet find shield,

The stout must stoop,

The daring droop,

And all be forc'd to yield.

And yet there's hope in Death,

For such as do in Christ believe,

For when they lose this breath

They truly do begin to live;

Their worst is past,

For even the last

Omega, well to dye,

The Alpha is

To joy and bliss

In Heavens Eternity.

To thee I therefore Cry,

Who dost both Grace and Glory give

Teach me Lord how to dye

That so I may be taught to live.

While I dwell in clay

I humbly pray

For an Heavenly Conciesation;

And when I must

Return to dust

Lord shew me thy Salvation.

MEDITATION

ON

PSALM the CXIX.

Verse the 71.

IT's good to be Afflicted, David saith,
And 'tis a truth, that's worthy of our Faith;
For in the worst, God doth intend our best,
And can convert our trouble to our rest:

If grief and pain, should not sometime annoy us,
Prosperity might possibly destroy us;
But to full bodies, fasting proves a friend,
Rank savors profit, where perfumes offend.

Thus be by whom the day spring from the dark,
Can make our Rubbs, directors to the mark;
He makes by marring, rows to keep from mofs;
Racks to refine, melts to consume our dross:

He casteth off, but, 'tis to draw us nigher,
He throws us down, only, to raise us higher,
He pares off part, but, to preserve the whole,
And wounds the Body, but, to save the Soul.

Repine

Repine not then to sup of sorrows cup,
 Nay, think not much, if God say, drink it up;
 'Tis wholesome, though unpleasant to the taste,
 'Tis hurt us present, but will heal at last.

When cutting cure's, when losses turn to gain,
 When crosses bless us, why should we complain:
 If binding set us free, blame not the fetter,
 That Rod deserves a kiss that makes us better.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART

Verse the 71

It is good to be afflicted, David said,
 And it is a trial, that is a trial,
 For the more, God hath made us better,
 And our hearts are made to be better.

It is good to be afflicted, David said,
 And it is a trial, that is a trial,
 For the more, God hath made us better,
 And our hearts are made to be better.

A DIALOGUE

It is good to be afflicted, David said,
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It is good to be afflicted, David said,
 And it is a trial, that is a trial,
 For the more, God hath made us better,
 And our hearts are made to be better.

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